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19 December Middle East and South Asia Review

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Israel

Violence in Territories—Three more Arabs were killed during clashes with IDF soldiers in the territories 18 December, Jerusalem radio reported.

The violence followed clashes in Nabulus 16 December that resulted in the death of six Palestinians.

The head of the IDF central command said his men opened fire in Nabulus to defend themselves against stonethrowers, the radio noted, and he warned that the IDF will make punishments for rioters "more severe."

On other casualties, Jerusalem radio reported that some 20 people were wounded in the clashes with the IDF 16 December, and at least 8 more were hurt in the Gaza Strip the following day.

THE JERUSALEM POST cited reports that over 30 Palestinians were wounded in the clashes on 18 December.

Four Israeli settlers from Ginnot Shomron were also injured by stones thrown at their vehicles, one of them sustaining a fractured skull, according to Jerusalem radio.

Settlers' representatives participated in a demonstration in Jerusalem protesting the U.S.-PLO dialogue and the deterioration of the security situation in the territories.

Coalition Prospects—Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir is seeking to renew the dialogue with Labor Party leaders, but if these efforts fail he will sign a coalition agreement with the religious and rightwing parties, Jerusalem radio reported 18 December.

A draft agreement for a narrow-based government is ready, the radio said, and it envisages the establishment of 40 new settlements in the next 4 years.

IDF radio noted that the impasse in the Likud-Alignment negotiations revolves around continuing differences over settlements, the distribution of portfolios, the chairmanship of the Knesset finance committee, and the Likud's financial commitments to the religious parties.

Comment on U.S. Decision—The U.S. decision to talk with an organization that "waves the banner of terrorism all over the world" was a "shock" and "it hurts to receive such a blow from friends," Prime Minister Shamir stated in a Jerusalem radio interview.

Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin told Jerusalem television that the U.S. decision was "mistaken and grave," adding that it constitutes "an a priori recognition of a Palestinian-PLO state" and has "legitimized" the uprising in the territories.

In a letter to the U.S. secretary of state published by THE JERUSALEM POST, Foreign Minister Peres said that while he remains convinced that the U.S. decision was "at best" premature, he was nevertheless "reassured" by U.S. explanations and clarifications on the issue.

Peres welcomed the U.S. emphasis on ensuring that the PLO lives up to its declarations on abandoning terrorism, the reaffirmation of U.S. opposition to a Palestinian state, and the clarification that the dialogue with the PLO "does not constitute an American recognition of the PLO as a negotiating partner."

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat described the 16 December U.S.-PLO meeting in Tunis as an "important first step in the right direction," Tunis radio reported.

The head of the PLO delegation to the talks, Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, described the meeting as "practical and frank," Algiers Voice of Palestine radio reported.

'Arafat held private talks 18 December with Egyptian President Mubarak to discuss the next steps to be taken in the peace process and coordination between Egypt and the PLO, MENA disclosed.

According to Israel's THE NATION, the United States and the PLO held secret negotiations in Tunis in parallel with the publicized talks.

The negotiations centered on U.S. demands for PLO cooperation with U.S. intelligence regarding issues such as the U.S. hostages in Lebanon and PLO ties with other terrorist organizations.

Fatah Central Committee member Salah Khalaf announced that PLO attacks on military targets in Israel will not stop and the uprising will continue until "the Palestinian flag is raised over Jerusalem," Radio Monte Carlo reported.

He said he expects Israel to try to "torpedo" the U.S.-PLO dialogue.

Khalid al-Hasan, another Fatah official cited by the radio, called on the United States to put pressure on Israel to end its policy of "state terrorism."

In Damascus, PNSF members met with Syrian Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam 17 December and announced plans to form a new PLO leadership, which will honor the Palestinian National Charter and continue the armed struggle against Israel, Voice of Lebanon radio reported.

The Fatah Provisional Command accused supporters of 'Arafat of firing on demonstrators in Libya who were protesting his recognition of Israel, the radio noted.

Lebanon

Hostages—Peter Winkler, a Swiss delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was released by his kidnappers in Sidon 16 December, AFP reported, noting that the Swiss foreign minister said no concessions were made to secure Winkler's release.

The minister also disclosed that Sweden's ambassador to Damascus played a role in mediating the release.

The ambassador confirmed this in remarks cited by Stockholm radio, noting that he met the kidnappers' representatives in Lebanon and told them it was impossible to meet their demands for a ransom and the release of a hijacker in a Swiss jail.

The kidnappers realized the unpopularity of their action and decided to release the ICRC employee unilaterally, he said.

An ICRC spokesman announced that his organization now intends to resume its activities in Lebanon in full, according to the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon.

As for the fate of other hostages, Shi'ite theologian Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah announced that he has "frozen" mediation efforts to secure the release of British hostage Terry Waite because he has failed to achieve positive results, according to Voice of Lebanon radio.

A previously unknown group calling itself the "Soldiers of Right" claimed responsibility for the kidnapping earlier this year of Belgian doctor Jan Cools, AFP reported.

Regarding the 16 December abduction and release of three UNIFIL soldiers, Jerusalem radio noted that the Amal Movement rescued the three Irishmen and captured 22 Shi'ites who had kidnapped them.

The UNIFIL soldiers had been seized following the detention of four suspected Lebanese Shi'ite terrorists by the IDF, the radio said.

The IDF subsequently released two of these suspects.

Attack on SLA Radio—Two Katyusha rockets were fired at the Voice of Hope radio station 18 December, damaging transmitting antennas, Jerusalem radio reported.

The Islamic Resistance claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement cited by Beirut radio.

Nevertheless, the Voice of Hope continued broadcasting that day.

In another development, two South Lebanese Army soldiers were killed by a mine near the radio station, Jerusalem radio revealed.

Beirut Crossing—The East Beirut authorities reopened the Museum crossing point 16 December, allowing supply trucks into the Western sector, according to Beirut radio.

Iran

Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani called the United States the symbol of Iran's fight against arrogance and said relations cannot be restored because public opinion is not ready for it and it is a decision only Ayatollah Khomeyni can make anyway.

Rafsanjani made the remarks in an address to students broadcast on Tehran television.

As for relations with other countries, Rafsanjani explained the phrase "neither East nor West" means Iran will resist domination by the East and West, not that it should not have relations with them.

With regard to reconstruction, he said Iran recognizes the fact that it will need foreign assistance.

He said no loans are planned, but credit transactions are being considered.

In other developments, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati announced during a news conference in Beijing that Iran has not purchased any weapons from China, but is looking for the "best sources" for sophisticated weapons, IRNA reported.

Afghanistan

Mujahidin alliance leader Burhannuddin Rabbani told a news conference the USSR may be willing to "abandon" the present regime in Kabul, AFP reported.

Based on his talks in Saudi Arabia with Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuliy Vorontsov, Rabbani said he believes the Soviets are "on the verge of accepting the reality" that the PDPA cannot be part of a new Afghan Government.

A second round of high-level direct talks is scheduled for "early next week," the agency noted.

Talks were held in Islamabad 17 December between resistance representatives and Soviet officials to discuss a prisoner exchange, AFP disclosed.

Resistance delegates protested the Soviet deployment of 5,000 troops in Qandahar as a "flagrant violation" of the understanding reached in Saudi Arabia, warning that the move could endanger the lives of Soviet prisoners.

In continued fighting, the mujahidin fired 1,500 missiles on Mehtarlam over 3 days before being repulsed by government forces, Kabul radio reported.

According to resistance sources cited by AFP, 20 Afghan Government troops were killed near Jalalabad when a Soviet Scud missile hit a garrison post by mistake.

Palestinian Affairs

Reportage on U.S.-PLO Talks in Tunis

1st 'Official Meeting' Begins

NC1612161588 Paris AFP in English 1611 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Tunis, Dec 16 (AFP)—The first official meeting between U.S. and PLO representatives for more than 13 years opened near here on Friday at 4:20 p.m. (1520 GMT).

U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Robert Pelletreau and a four-man Palestinian delegation held a brief session for photographers before entering talks in closed session.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation delegates were Executive Committee members Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh and 'Abdallah Hurani, Foreign Affairs Director 'Abd al-Latif Abu Hijlah, and the PLO representative in Tunisia, Hakim Bal'awi. A single session of talks was envisaged.

Meeting Ends; Sides Comment

JN1612192488 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The first meeting between a Palestinian delegation and U.S. Ambassador Robert Pelletreau has ended in Tunis. The ambassador stated that the talks were frank and direct.

Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, head of the PLO Information Department, who heads the Palestinian delegation, said the meeting was candid and constructive. He added that the two sides will meet again within a few weeks.

'Satisfaction' Expressed

LD1612205388 Kuwait KUNA in English 1951 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Tunis, Dec 16 (KUNA)—Heads of the Palestinian and U.S. delegations to the first round of talks, concluded here tonight, expressed satisfaction for the atmosphere in which the talks were held.

In statements they made following the meeting, they said the first round of talks has allowed for presenting the viewpoints of both sides toward the peace process in the Middle East following the positive developments in the positions of the Palestinian leadership and the U.S. Administration.

U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, who is heading the American side to the talks, Robert Pelletreau reiterated his country's position which calls for direct talks between the parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict with the aim of reaching a comprehensive peace.

Member of the PLO Executive Committee Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, who headed the Palestinian side to the talks called for speeding up the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East in which all parties concerned, including Palestine and Israel, take part.

He emphasized that the popular uprising in the occupied territories has paved the way for the U.S.-PLO dialogue and pledged that the revolt would continue until the goals of the Palestinian people are realized, including setting up the Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Concluding, 'Abd Rabbuh said the talks would be resumed within weeks, but he did not give a specific date.

Talks Called 'Constructive'

LD1712073288 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 0700 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] 'Abdullah Hurani, member of the PLO Executive Committee and member of the Palestinian delegation to the Palestinian-U.S. negotiations, which took place yesterday in Tunisia, has described the meeting of the two sides, the Palestinian and the U.S. as constructive. He said that the talks per se are significant in that they broke a barrier that existed for many years.

In a statement issued today in Abu Dhabi, he said that during the negotiation session the U.S. side expressed its desire for the U.S.-PLO to continue. He pointed out that the U.S. ambassador in Tunisia, who represented his country's side in the talks, stressed that this desire is not only on the part of the present administration, but of the new administration, which supports and wants the negotiations to continue.

'Arafat: Meeting 'Sound Step'

JN1712161688 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] At an impromptu news conference in Tunis today, Yasir 'Arafat commented on the U.S.-Palestinian meeting yesterday. He described it by saying: It is a sound step in the right direction.

This is 'Arafat's first comment following the U.S. decision to initiate a substantive dialogue with the PLO.

Yasir 'Arafat added: We agreed to hold another meeting and we have entered into a constructive dialogue at their request, because the United States is one of the two superpowers and a permanent member in the UN Security Council Council, and no solution can be attained without its participation.

In reply to a question 'Arafat said: The basic topic we must discuss is to work to hold an international Middle East peace conference as soon as possible.

U.S. Envoy on Talks

LD1712191288 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] The U.S. ambassador to Tunisia has described the talks which took place between the Palestinian and U.S. sides as very practical.

In a press statement after the conclusion of the first meeting between the two sides, he said that the talks included important issues, and he expressed his hopes that the dialogue will help to achieve progress toward a comprehensive peace.

Brother Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, head of the PLO Information Department, described the meeting as practical and frank in character. He predicted that the dialogue would continue in a way which will ensure the holding of an international peace conference as soon as possible with the participation of all concerned parties.

Brother 'Abd Rabbuh said they had presented the PLO's views during this meeting. He pointed out the PLO has done everything that might facilitate the holding of an international conference.

PNC Chairman on Dialogue

LD1712191988 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] PNC Chairman Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sa'ih has expressed his satisfaction with the new U.S. stance which resulted in beginning a diaogue with the PLO.

In a press statement, Shaykh al-Sa'ih said: We hope that the new U.S. step will lead to the next step of a formation of a preparatory committee for a international conference, resulting in a conference that will lead to a just peace, as the PNC resolutions adopted at the recent session designate this as an aim of the PLO.

'Arafat Ends Romania Visit, Returns to Tunis

LD1712182788 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Brother leader Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and commander in chief of the Palestinian Revolution Forces, has concluded his 2-day official visit to Romania. During the visit he had two rounds of talks with Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu about the developments of the Palestinian issue.

A radio reporter in Bucharest described this visit and the talks as positive and successful. He said: During his meetings with President Ceausescu, brother leader Abu 'Ammar reviewed developments relevant to the Palestinian issue, especially those since the recent PNC extraordinary session in Algiers. Brother leader Abu 'Ammar also praised the stance of Romania, which had hastened to recognize the Palestinian state, thereby stressing its principled stance in support of the Palestinian people.

The Romanian president stressed the firmness of Romania's stances in support of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people's struggle. He stressed the necessity to work seriously for the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

In a brief interview with the press before leaving Bucharest, brother leader Abu 'Ammar stressed that his visit to Romania and his talks with President Ceausescu had been successful and had included a detailed discussion of the developments of the situation in the Middle East and the success achieved by the Palestinian issue in the international arena.

On the other hand, brother leader Abu 'Ammar considered the first United States-Palestinian meeting, which took place yesterday in Tunis, as an important step giving momentum to the call for an international conference on the Middle East.

In his interview, brother leader Abu 'Ammar also mentioned that the transitional Palestinian Government whose formation was ratified during the PNC extraordinary session, will include personalities from within and outside the occupied territories.

We point out that brother leader Abu 'Ammar returned to Tunisia today at dawn, where he will preside over the meeting of the PLO Executive Committee which will be held this evening in Tunis to discuss, study, and assess the steps taken along the road of getting recognition of the Palestinian state and the results of the United Nations General Assembly meetings and its resolutions concerning the Palestinian cause. [passage omitted]

Tomorrow brother leader Abu 'Ammar will begin a 2-day official visit to Austria. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Asks EEC To Play More Effective Role

JN1712175288 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1725 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] At a news conference in Tunis, Yasir 'Arafat has stated that the EEC must play a more effective role for the attainment of peace in the Middle East. He added: The EEC must adopt more positive measures to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict as soon as possible.

'Arafat said that he agrees with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas' request on holding a preparatory meeting at the level of the foreign ministers of the UN Security Council members to pave the way for holding an international conference. 'Arafat added that the EEC must contribute to speeding up the convocation of the international conference.

PLO's Al-Hasan on U.S. Decision, Israeli Stand

JN1612214788 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2035 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] London, 16 Dec (WAKH)—Khalid al-Hasan, the political adviser to the PLO Executive Committee chairman, has expressed pessimism about the possibility of a real change in the Israeli stand toward the Palestinian peace steps.

In an interview broadcast tonight by London radio, Al-Hasan said he does not expect any change in the Israeli stance at the present stage. He added it is in the nature of the Zionist entity to refuse to give anything of its free will without direct international pressures. He also said that the mentality of its leaders is characterized by covered stubbornness and clear extremism. At the same time, he asserted that if anything is to happen, it will be through the international conference for peace in the Middle East.

Answering a question on what the Palestinian side expects from the direct dialogue with the United States, he expressed his conviction that this will be an exploration of viewpoints between the two sides before embarking on a serious political dialogue. He also said: If we take into consideration the U.S. statements as basis for the negotiations, the distance between the U.S. stand and the PLO stand is very large.

Answering a question on the possibility of forming a joint Arab delegation to attend the international peace conference, Khalid al-Hasan said on the conclusion of his statement that the PLO does not object to its formation because the Palestinians and Arabs want peace and are making serious steps toward it.

PLO Protests to UN Over Israeli Actions

JN1712184588 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1744 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Palestine's acting charge d'affaires, brother Riyad Mansur, has submitted a protest memorandum to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar against the bloody massacre perpetrated by the Zionist occupation forces in the heroic city of Nabulus yesterday.

PLO Radio Comments on U.S. Dialogue Decision

JN1712074888 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1730 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Unattributed talk]

[Text] Brothers; masses of our great Palestinian people; our glorious Arab nation:

With the positive American move—the first such move on the Palestine question—calling for engaging the PLO in a direct dialogue, the Middle East conflict now takes a new political twist. Given the seriousness and truthfulness of our peaceful intentions, our hopes concerning the prospect of attaining a just peace are are now revived.

It is hoped, however, that this positive American move will translate itself into a position that addresses the Palestinian story more fully, as we anticipate. Our anticipation is built on the fact that the peace initiative enunciated by brother leader Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] in Geneva provided the key to these recent developments.

In other words, we have been contributors to the new state of affairs not just through our political rhetoric but above all through our energetic onslaught on all fronts of the struggle—an onslaught that has been mounting all the time: the valiant uprising. This is to say that our dialogue with the American Administration will be between equals without any preconditons. This reinforces our belief in the possibility of a development of the positive American move, which has had the effect of proving that talking directly to the PLO is an important step in the peace process.

[Words indistinct] leaders of the Israeli enemy more than anyone else. Yitzhaq Shamir's reticence on the American move proves our point. Shamir's silence is symptomatic more of underlying fears of the positive American move developing further than a mere rejection.

As for Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, he is too weak to keep silent. This may be because his fears are greater. This is why he said unambiguously that the new situation is so grave that Israel will have to do some real soul-searching. He has warned that should Israel fail to take the political initiative, it will find itself politically under siege.

After acknowledging reality, Peres tries with his customary sophistry and prevarication to bypass it with a dull suggestion; namely, that Israel talk to elected Palestinians. He chooses to forget that his suggestion was previously tried without success by the Americans over many years.

Given the ever-growing worldwide recognition of the independent Palestinian state and more countries dealing with the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, Peres is a new Don Quixote tilting at windmills with a worn-out sword. Indeed, Peres is in worse shape than a drowning man clutching to a straw.

Shim'on Peres, the diplomat whom the uprising [word indistinct] and demolished all of his public relations maneuvers, wants the Israeli ideological, political, and informational effort to stand against solid facts that become stronger by the day. Is there anything to match this hallucination?

We will not ask how much longer the Israeli leaders will keep up the hallucination and raving as well as this fruitless running away from the Palestinian reality that continually thrives and wins more and more friends. We will not ask how much longer the enemy leaders will keep up the hallucination.

Only 3 days ago, commenting on the initial American reaction to brother Abu 'Ammar's Geneva speech, we said the American Administration is shielded behind fragile political defenses by contending that the Palestinian rhetoric is still [word indistinct].

We said that these defenses will not stand for long in the face of the Palestinian political onslaught—the onslaught of a decided peace helped along with the force of the uprising and growing international support for its just objectives.

Our predictions have materialized. The American political defenses collapsed and gave way to an unprecedented political move calling for engaging the PLO in a direct dialogue as a key step in the peace process. What is there left? Only very little remains. The collapse of occupation and its final fragile defenses appears on the horizon, promising our certain victory when the banners of our Palestinian state will fly high. We are victorious.

PFLP-GC's Jibril on U.S. Decision on PLO

JN1712191088 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1757 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] In Damascus, the PFLP-GC yesterday asserted that the United States, which only opened a limited door for dialogue with the PLO, wants to impose four more conditions on it.

PFLP-GC Secretary General Ahmad Jibril said that Washington wants to make PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat seriously contribute to stop the uprising, declare a confederation with Jordan, unreservedly accept the existence of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and accept that Jerusalem remains united under the control of Israel and that religious holy places have an autonomous status like the Vatican.

Jibril asserted that the United States will present these conditions through its ambassador in Tunis, who was appointed by Washington as the only channel authorized to start a dialogue with the Palestinian organization.

Jibril added: The U.S. maneuvers and the agreement, which 'Arafat wants to sign with the United States, is in itself treason and a conspiracy, which will be confronted by the lively forces in our Arab nation.

'Arafat Supporters Fire at Opponents in Libya

NC1712154188 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1515 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] In Damascus, Fatah, the provisional command, accused 'Arafat supporters of firing bullets at demonstrators in Tripoli, Libya, who were protesting 'Arafat's recognition of Israel.

A spokesman for the Fatah dissidents added that the firing came from the PLO office in the Libyan capital and several people were wounded in the incident.

The Libyan radio confirmed the report on the demonstration. It did not refer to any firing of bullets, however.

Egypt

'Arafat Arrives, Confers in Private With Mubarak

NC1812172088 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1640 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, at the presidential offices in Heliopolis tonight. The two leaders held a session of private talks. 'Arafat arrived in Cairo earlier today.

Leaders Hold News Conference

NC1812213588 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2010 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has reiterated Egypt's support for the PLO and for the Palestinian people's efforts to establish just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

At the outset of a press conference which he held with Yasir 'Arafat following their talks this evening, President Mubarak welcomed Brother Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] saying: I welcome Brother Abu 'Ammar in Egypt, his country and the country of our Palestinian brothers. I welcome him in Egypt, which spares nothing for our brothers in the PLO. Egypt has been always supporting the PLO in its cause. This is aid freely given and is meant to serve the goal of establishing peace and of giving the Palestinians their due rights.

President Mubarak added: We welcome once again Abu 'Ammar to Cairo, particularly after the successful speech which he delivered to the UN General Assembly at its European headquarters in Geneva. He also said: I believe everybody followed up the speech, which was relayed directly in Egypt. Each of us felt happy because of the excellent indications in this speech. They are indications of peace, a solution of the problem, a definite desire to attain the Palestinian rights and for establishing a Palestinian state similar to the establishing of an Israeli state. They are indications of discarding terrorism and of acknowledging UN Resolutions Nos 242 and 338 with a view to convening the international conference to find a solution to the Palestinian issue.

President Mubarak went on: All this was declared at the UN General Assembly in Geneva. It earned our admiration and that of every state in this society. I believe that all the world has heard this speech because there was great progress in its wake. The United States decided to initiate contacts with the PLO. This is a great change in the U.S. policy. We must keep this up, and the dialogue must continue. We must not listen to any biased opinions which seek to undermine this dialogue, because it is important.

Referring to the horizons of the Egyptian-Palestinian moves, particularly after the initiation of the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue, President Mubarak said: We in Egypt act, naturally, in the interests of the cause of regional peace. He added: We want to establish the Palestinian state in accordance with Resolution No 181 within the borders which existed in 1967. We want stability in the region, and we want peace to prevail in the whole region, including Israel.

Answering a question on the date and venue of the start of negotiations between the U.S. and PLO on a high level, 'Arafat said: First, this is a strategic line—the peace line—of the PLO.

'Arafat added: We will continue along the line of peace in accordance with what our PNC decides. It is clear from our resolutions in Algiers, my speech in Geneva, and our continuous contacts with our brothers and friends everywhere that these discussions, which took place with the U.S. Administration in Tunis 2 days ago, will continue along this line.

Asked if Israel would accept peace, Abu 'Ammar said: Peace is, undoubtedly, very important. This is not a tactical line. We do not struggle for war but for a just peace. President Mubarak interrupted here to say: Achieving peace would be a great success for all of us, including Israel.

Answering a question regarding the next step along the path of peace, President Mubarak said: We now have the dialogue between the United States and the PLO as a first step. We want to bolster this dialogue so as to enable the international conference for peace to convene.

Responding to a question about U.S. adherence to the position that direct negotiations should be held between Israel and the PLO and that the international conference would be merely procedural, President Mubarak said that he cannot understand why some oppose the international conference. He added: The international conference is not a substitute for direct discussions, but it will lead to such discussions. He asked: Why do we fear the international conference when the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, agree between themselves now? Previously, this was a problem. Europe and a large part of Israel also agree to hold the conference. Consequently, neither Israel nor the United States should fear the convening of the international conference because it will definitely lead to direct negotiations.

Abu 'Ammar added to this, saying: First I would like to ask, do you believe that we will go to the international conference to talk with ourselves? No, we will go to talk with our enemies; with whom else will we establish peace? We will make peace with our enemies. Therefore, discussions will undoubtedly be held at the international conference. Consequently, we will not go there to speak to ourselves. This is clear from what the president said.

Abu 'Ammar added: On this occasion, I wish to express my profound gratitude for the effort which President Husni Mubarak exerted with the U.S. Administration after my recent speech at the UN General Assembly in

Geneva. It also want to express my gratitude for the effort which King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia has also exerted. This effort contributed largely to the initiation of this dialogue with the United States. In the name of our people, that of the Palestinian leadership, and of the uprising heroes, I express my gratitude to the president for his constructive, strong, and firm brotherly stand in this direction.

Asked whether he is prepared to deliver a speech to the Israeli Knesset if invited to do so, 'Arafat said: During my speech in Geneva I invited the Israeli leaders to come to the United Nations so that we might sit together and create peace. I believe that sitting together at the United Nations would be better for me and them.

Asked about the Israeli stand now, President Mubarak said: The Israeli stand is not clear these days. I say that peace calls for sacrifices because peace is very costly. The president pointed out that in the past, Israel wanted to speak to any of the parties to settle the issue. He then said: We have now reached this stage. The PLO is ready to speak with Israel, but now Israel refuses to do so.

President Mubarak added: This is a strange stand. In the past, the Israelis wanted to discuss peace with the PLO or anyone else. The PLO says now: We are prepared to talk with them, but the Israelis say no. The president asked: is this not a strange stand? He added: I call on the Israeli leaders to show flexibility because peace calls for flexibility and sacrifices by all parties. Peace is very costly, and it must be the primary target. Let us avoid the many maneuvers so we may establish stability and ensure safety both for ourselves as an Arab nation and for Israel within its borders.

Asked whether the United States will acknowledge, during its dialogue with the PLO, any of the rights of the occupied territories' inhabitants, 'Arafat said: This question has no answer because, as I said previously, this uprising will continue one wave after another until the Israeli occupation is terminated and our Palestinian flag is raised in our independent state.

Asked about Arab plans to exploit international support in the interests of the Palestinian issue, 'Arafat said: Is it not the purpose of my visit to President Mubarak to lay down the features for this plan and action?

Asked what he could say to world public opinion, which has so strongly supported the cause, President Mubarak said: The world public supports the cause and we thank them, for they are upholding what is right. This is a very important process. If the world public were not convinced of the Palestinians' right to their land, they would have not expressed such comprehensive and total support for the cause. I believe that world public opinion is very much convinced about the Palestinians' rights in their homeland and concerning the return to their land.

Asked about the outlook for Arab action in the coming stage, President Mubarak said: I want to say something. There was Arab activity both in Geneva and the United States when 'Arafat was making his speech in Geneva. In this regard I say that the United States exerted great efforts to reach its decision. We supported this effort, and we are in contact with the U.S. Administration.

At this point Abu 'Ammar added: Together with your own efforts, Your Excellency, Mr President.

President Mubarak added: However, we must not ignore the effort of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which we appreciate because it is an Arab effort. 'Arafat said: We too appreciate it, Your Excellency Mr President.

President Mubarak further said: All the Arab states, with the exception of those which did not attend [the Geneva debate] exerted efforts to give an impetus to the peace process. Mubarak emphasized that Arab cooperation and coordination are important, saying: We will reach our goal, God willing, through Arab coordination and cooperation. Commenting, 'Arafat said: This is why all [as received] Arab foreign ministers were present in Geneva. This demonstrates the Arab solidarity with the Palestinian question, Palestinian people, and the uprising.

'Arafat Message Read at Seminar

NC1812170088 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1310 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—[Passage omitted] Jamal al-Surani, member of the PLO Executive Committee, today read out a message by Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, to the African regional seminar on the Palestinian problem which opened in Cairo this morning. [passage omitted] This is the text of 'Arafat's message:

On the occasion of the convocation of your respected African regional seminar in Cairo, on behalf of our Arab Palestinian people, on behalf of my brother members of the PLO Executive Committee, and on my own behalf, I wish to present you with best wishes for the success of your seminar. [passage omitted]

Your African regional seminar is holding its meetings in Cairo following the Palestinian peace initiative announced through the resolutions of the PNC at its 19th session held recently in Algiers. The peaceful initiative came to crown the continued struggle for liberation staged by our people as well as the massive popular uprising in our Palestinian occupied territories, the uprising which is being carried out against the Israeli occupation forces and the repressive policies of the government of the Israeli enemy, the policies of the iron fist and breaking bones.

The Palestinian peaceful initiative came also to confirm the desire of our people to live in peace in their blessed land, the land of peace, prophets, and divine messages.

Our people in the occupied Palestinian territories are being faced with repression, persecution, and official Zionist terrorism adopted by the Israeli occupation forces. However, our people have chosen peace as their strategy.

Meanwhile, the Zionist enemy has opted for dark methods, for intransigence, for the arrogance of power. The Zionist enemy is holding fast to the policies of aggression and denies the inalienable rights of our Palestinian people, relying in that on the unlimited military, political, diplomatic, and economic support which the U.S. Administration is providing. The United States and Israel are almost standing alone in the face of international legitimately, international administration [al-idarah al-duwaliyah] and international consensus. There is overwhelming international support for our Palestinian peace initiative and our call for achieving peace for all the nations in the region through the holding of an effective international conference for peace in the Middle East.

Such a conference should be held under UN supervision, in the UN framework, and with the participation of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and all the parties in the conflict, including the PLO, which should take part in this conference on equal footing ['ala qadam al-musawah].

Our peaceful initiative triggered significant developments. Among these are the recognition by a great number of the world's nations of the independent Palestinian state, the recent decisions by the UN General Assembly to grant Palestine observer status at the United Nations, and the support for holding the Middle East international peace conference.

Our peaceful initiative was also followed by a positive shift in the U.S. position concerning opening dialogue with the PLO. The shift was a constructive and necessary step to push the Middle East peace process forward.

These important developments triggered by our peaceful initiative confirm the necessity for continued efforts by the international community, and particularly by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, to further the peace process and to endorse the proposal which I made within our peaceful initiative in Geneva, concerning the formation of a preparatory committee for the international conference.

The continued incidents inside our occupied territories, especially the continuation of brutal Israel repression against our unarmed people, confirm the dire need to place the occupied Palestinian territories under temporary UN supervision in order to end the occupation of the Palestinian land and to stop the suffering of the Palestinian people. This will allow the Palestinians to establish their own independent state on their own land with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

I am certain, dear friends, that your respected seminar will tackle the disastrous conditions to which our people are subjected under Israeli occupation and will underline the justice of our demands to end the Israeli occupation. I am certain that your seminar will give support to the Palestinian peaceful initiative which aims to attain peace for our people and for the region's nations on the basis of international law and resolutions and through the restoration of our people's inalienable national rights, including the right to return, to self-determination, and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

I conclude by saluting the struggle of all friendly African nations and countries to strengthen their independence, to develop their economic abilities, and to fight natural disasters such as desertification. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Leaves Cairo

NC1912063388 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 19 Dec (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat left Cairo this morning following a 1-day visit to Egypt, during which he was received by President Husni Mubarak.

The talks between Mubarak and 'Arafat centered on the next steps to be taken to continue pushing the peace process forward. They also focused on coordination between Egypt and the PLO in light of recent important developments and the outcome of the first U.S.-PLO meeting.

The Palestinian leader was seen off at the airport by Ambassador Sami Thabit, chief of protocol at the Foreign Ministry.

UK's Waldegrave Visits, Meets With Mubarak

Views Palestinian Contacts

NC1812145988 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1409 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—Following a meeting with President Husni Mubarak today, the UK minister of state at the British and Commonwealth Department, William Waldegrave, said that he is pleased with his meeting with President Mubarak and also with his talks with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

Waldegrave said that his country welcomes the U.S. decision to open dialogue with the PLO. He described the U.S. decision as similar to UK moves concerning contacts with the PLO.

Waldegrave said that Egypt plays a central role in bringing together all parties concerned and in seeking a framework for holding the international peace conference.

The UK minister said that his country strongly supports President Mubarak and his initiative, adding that both the UK Government and Egypt are working toward establishing a lasting peace in the region. [passage omitted]

Answering a question on the prospect of holding meetings between 'Arafat and UK officials, Waldegrave said that UK Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe has said that there is no reason why this cannot happen. Waldegrave said: We are looking forward to holding further meetings when the need arises so as to make progress toward peace.

The UK state minister said: My mission includes holding talks with the PLO. We will probably hold contacts with Bassam Abu Sharif. We have no objection to holding any contacts with the PLO.

Asked about UK stand on the Palestinian state, Waldegrave said: We are currently seeking to hold the international conference. Afterward, there will be self-determination, and the Palestinian people should decide their own future. This is the objective toward which we should move in the coming stage.

Waldegrave concluded by noting that the prospects for peace are now better than they have been for years.

'Abd al-Majid Comments

NC1812162588 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has expressed his appreciation for the recent British stand on the Palestinian question and its recent developments. He stressed the need to intensify efforts to expedite convening the international conference for peace.

'Abd al-Majid was speaking after the conclusion of the Egyptian-British session of talks. Developments in the Middle East situation, the recent developments in the positive U.S. stand on initiating a dialogue with the PLO, and efforts to convene the international conference for peace, especially the British role in this, were discussed during this session. The relations between Egypt and Britain and ways of bolstering them in various fields were also discussed. The instruments of ratification were exchanged for the consular agreement signed by the two countries in 1985, which regulates the consular relations between Egypt and Britain.

The official Egyptian-British discussions began at the Foreign Ministry at noon today. Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, headed the Egyptian side while William Waldegrave, minister of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Department, led the British side.

Waldegrave Departs Cairo

NC1912082188 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0736 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 19 Dec (MENA)—William Waldegrave, British minister of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs, left Cairo for home this morning following a 5-day visit, during which he was received by President Husni Mubarak.

During his stay in Cairo Waldegrave held talks with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, on the situation in the Middle East and, in particular, the Palestinian issue.

The British official was seen off at the airport by Ambassador Sami Thabit, chief of protocol at the Foreign Ministry, and British Ambassador in Cairo William Adams.

'Abd al-Majid, PLO's Al-Surani Meet in Cairo

NC1712161488 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1320 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—Jamal al-Surani, member of the PLO Executive Committee, met today with Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

Following the meeting, Al-Surani said that the meeting was in the framework of continued Egyptian-Palestinian consultations and that it was an opportunity to express appreciation to President Husni Mubarak, the Egyptian Government, and the Egyptian people for their marvelous and unremitting support for the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people.

Al-Surani said that the meeting dealt with the recent developments in Geneva during the UN General Assembly meetings when the Arabs were able to face the world with a united position for the first time in years.

Al-Surani said that the world has responded favorably to the unified Arab stand. This, he added, is clear from the resolutions that were passed and also from the recent U.S. response to Arab and international views. There has been a turning point, Al-Surani stated, in the course of the Palestinian problem. The Palestinian issue has come to the fore after 40 years of oblivion.

Referring to the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue in Tunis yesterday, Al-Surani said: We have great hopes for this dialogue. We hope that it will open the door wide, particularly when the new U.S. Administration comes to office in 1 month. The new U.S. president is well-acquainted with the issue. The decision to hold the U.S.-Palestinian meeting was made before the new U.S. President is to take office. This will help him continue the trend, particularly now that all world's nation, including those in Europe, have voted in Geneva in favor of the international conference, Al-Surani added.

There is international support, and this applies to the permanent members of the UN Security Council, for holding the international conference, Al-Surani noted. This makes us hope that this conference will be held. Therefore, the Arabs should formulate a cohesive and comprehensive stand to tap international suppot for our Arab rights concerning Palestine. Certainly, there is a need for redoubled efforts and a heightened sense of responsibility for tackling the harder challenges of the future.

Al-Surani said that there will be several Egyptian-Palestinian meetings in the near future, as consultations between Egypt and the Palestinians are instrumental in the drive for the Palestinian issue, which is also the issue of our Arab nation.

As for the coming Arab summit, Al-Surani said that it will be held at the nearest possible opportunity and that Egypt will take part in it, thus regaining its leading role in the Arab world. He expressed hope for greater Arab unity in the coming phase.

Al-Surani described the session held between U.S. and Palestinian sides in Tunis yesterday as promising and constructive, saying that it will be followed by other sessions. He expressed his satisfaction with the meeting, saying that the Palestinians consider it a turning point in the U.S. policy toward the Palestinians and the Arabs.

Al-Surani said that the Arabs can hope for a new dawn of life in a free land and for a better future. He saluted the Palestinian people and their great uprising, which gave the whole world a singular example of a nation of men, women, youth, and children who resist and reject occupation with little more than a stone and a belief in God and the homeland.

Al-Surani also saluted all the martyrs of our Arab people, in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Palestine.

'Abd al-Majid on U.S.-PLO Meeting, Other Issues

NC1612213088 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, returned to Cairo tonight after attending the UN General Assembly meeting on the Palestinian issue in Geneva.

Upon his return, Dr 'Abd al-Majid expressed Egypt's satisfaction with the beginning of a new phase for achieving peace. He added that, undoubtedly, President Mubarak's efforts had been decisive in arriving at these encouraging results. He said: We wish the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue success. He added that Cairo will hold important contacts with a number of European and other officials within the next few days.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid indicated that he had held meetings with several foreign ministers in Geneva, especially the Arab foreign ministers, with the aim of moving the peace process forward.

Dr 'Abd al-Majid also praised the efforts of the Swedish foreign minister, who played a key role in the developments that took place at the United Nations.

Concluding his statement, Dr 'Abd al-Majid disclosed that he also had met with the director of International Labor Organization [ILO] who begins a visit to Cairo tomorrow. The meeting dealt with the issue of the Egyptian workers expelled from Libya. The ILO director stressed that a meeting between the Egyptian and Libyan sides will be held in Geneva on 20 and 21 December in this regard. Dr 'Abd al-Majid expressed the hope that this issue will be settled during the meeting.

Discusses Peace Process

NC1812111588 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0945 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—An African regional seminar attended by members of governmental and non-governmental organizations, opened in Cairo this morning. It has been organized by the UN committee concerned with the Palestinian people's exercise of their national rights and will last until 22 December.

Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, addressed the seminar, asserting that the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue is a positive and important step in the right direction, in response to the constructive and historic stands and resolutions adopted by the Palestinian side. He said that this dialogue will contribute actively to genuine progress in achieving a just, durable, and peaceful settlement. He expressed his appreciation of the constructive U.S. stand in support of the peace efforts.

In his address, which was read out on his behalf by Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador 'Aziz Sayf al-Nasr, 'Abd al-Majid said that Israel must respond to the genuine and sincere peace call and must soon participate actively in this historic phase ot achieve a just and lasting peace that will eliminate the suffering, wars, destruction, and instability seen in this region.

He emphasized that the international community has a special responsibility at this stage for creating favorable circumstances for a peaceful settlement. He noted that to gurantee success for such a move, strong international support for the PLO's peaceful tendency is required. He stated that consultations must be initiated among the parties concerned, including the permanent members of the UN Security Council and the UN secretary general, to discuss arrangements for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East with all the parties concerned, including the PLO, taking part on equal footing. 'Abd al-Majid pointed out that this move

also requires international efforts to be stepped up, so that the response of all the parties to this peaceful move within the framework of an international conference may be guaranteed. No party should be allowed to stall a move based on the international community's resolutions and desire, he declared.

Abd al-Majid affirmed that Egypt will persistently continue its efforts to utilize the numerous constructive elements available at this stage so that the Palestinian cause may break out of the circle of missed opportunities and join with all the world's peace-loving forces to achieve a just, durable, and peaceful settlement that will take into consideration the rights of all the region's peoples, without distinction.

Al-Baz Returns, Comments on U.S. Decision

NC1612155488 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1510 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Cairo, 16 Dec (MENA)—Dr 'Usamah al-Baz, first under secretary at the Foreign Ministry and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, returned to Cairo this afternoon following a 3-day visit to Bahrain, during which he gave a lecture on international relations before the Cultural Club in Bahrain.

In an arrival statement, Dr al-Baz said that Egypt welcomes the U.S. initiative and regards it as the beginning of a U.S. understanding which will mark a new stage regarding the U.S. stand on Arab rights.

Dr al-Baz said the future results and reflections of such a stand will depend on the objective change which can be summed up in three points: first, the U.S. eagerness to hold an international peace conference; second, the U.S. recognition of the Palestinian people's right to full and active participation in an international conference; and third, the U.S. open-mindedness to the concept of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Dr al-Baz added that the United States must present to us, and to the Palestinians, its concept of the goal it is seeking and the role it can play in resolving the issue. He added that the United States must outline the form of its contribution with regard to pushing the peace wheel forward to resolve the Palestinian problem, and the role it is willing to play with regard to facilitating the solution.

Dr al-Baz said that the beginning of the dialogue on the part the United States is a means rather than an end. Other European countries, particularly France and Britain, as primary countries, and China as a Third World country, should play a positive role, he said.

As for the Soviet stand, Dr al-Baz said it will be determined in light of developments. [passage omitted]

Al-Baz Interviewed

PM1612164488 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 16 Dec 88 p 30

[Interview with Dr 'Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, by 'Usamah 'Ajaj in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] AL-HAWADITH: Recent visits to Cairo and meetings there between President Husni Mubarak, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, King Husayn of Jordan, and PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat prompt numerous questions. Is there a quadripartite Arab move to intensify efforts to serve the Palestinian cause?

Al-Baz: Egypt certainly has no concept of bipartite, tripartite, or quadripartite moves, because we believe that bloc maneuvering might not serve general interests. But we believe that if we were able to establish a concept of a pan-Arab approach in the coming period—through consultations and by exchanging views with the largest possible number of Arab states, officials, thinkers, and political movements—it would be more beneficial. It is on this basis that the recent meetings were held between President Husni Mubarak, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, His Majesty King Husayn, and PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, who is the leader of the newly born state.

Consultations are also being conducted with the leaders of the other Arab states. The purpose of these moves is to coordinate positions, especially as the next stage will witness many challenges in the various positions adopted by various states—including friendly states—and peace forces. It is in the interests of us all to coordinate with the largest possible number of Arab states through various channels. For instance, messages can be exchanged between between President Mubarak and a number of Arab leaders and kings with whom no direct contacts have been held recently.

AL-HAWADITH: What about Arab moves with regard to the Palestinian problem and 'Arafat's recent visit?

Al-Baz: I believe that 'Arafat's visit to Cairo following his meetings with President Saddam Husayn and His Majesty King Husayn is part of an extensive series of moves and consultations, especially as Arab moves and policy concentrate on the Palestinian problem, which is the focus of attention at consultations and in coordination contacts. That is why successive meetings between President Mubarak and Yasir 'Arafat are useful and necessary. We know that Yasir 'Arafat is making contacts and holding consultations with all Arab states. He recently toured almost all the Arab capitals and met with their leaders, who were briefed on the PLO's and the Palestinian people's ideas vis-a-vis moves in the next stage. That was done through consultations in order to ensure maximum benefit. 'Arafat's visit was an extension of previous meetings and recent developments. It was the fruit of extensive efforts, not an isolated phenomenon.

AL-HAWADITH: It has been reported that the recent meetings were directed toward convening a quadripartite summit comprising President Mubarak, Saddam Husayn, King Husayn, and Yasir 'Arafat, but certain circumstances or engagements prevented that summit from being held.

Al-Baz: The reports concerning a quadripartite summit were untrue. I stress again that the idea of blocs in Arab action is not useful. Because if there is a bloc, others will then have the right to consider themselves another party. Let me ask: What strategic interests or objectives link us with the states of that axis? Arab action as a whole is certainly focused on the Palestinian cause, as I said earlier. Bloc action would drag us into personal interests and policies, and this is rejected as an approach for Egyptian foreign policy, because we disapprove of it.

AL-HAWADITH: How can the recent U.S. position, namely, its refusal to grant 'Arafat an entry visa to New York and the transfer of the Palestine session to Geneva, be exploited? And what backing can Egypt offer in this regard?

Al-Baz: What Egypt can offer is not the important thing. The Arab nation as a whole, including Egypt, backs the PLO and supports the Palestinian people and their courageous, legitimate demands. The PNC resolutions have proved that the Palestinian people want to achieve peace, preserve their entity, and assume and determine their own destiny on their own territory—which deserves the Arab states' backing. Egypt is shouldering a special responsibility toward backing the Palestinian people, and it will never abandon that responsibility. As for the transfer of the session from New York to Geneva, we must use this to serve the Palestinian cause, but not as a tactical position. As to which position would serve the Palestinian cause best, this is being discussed with the Palestinian brothers.

AL-HAWADITH: Hard-line statements emerged after the Palestinian moderation and flexibility expressed at the PNC met with a rigid U.S. position, and especially after the U.S. refusal to grant 'Arafat an entry visa. Is there is a danger that the acceptance of Resolution Nos 242 and 338 could be revoked? What is your comment?

Al-Baz: What problem is there in the U.S. rejection of the Palestinian moves or refusal to grant 'Arafat a visa? What is important is to overcome that rejection, limit its impact, and develop the U.S. position to suit our interests. The recent statements do more harm than good!

Cairo Papers on Future of U.S.-PLO Dialogue

NC1712085588 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA)—Today's commentaries in the Cairo papers express the hope that the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue which has just started in Tunis will lead to positive results. In this way the peace drive, which has gained substantial momentum in the last few days, may be given a stimulus toward a comprehensive and just solution.

AL-JUMHURIYAH notes that a number of international initiatives followed the U.S. decision to start a dialogue with the PLO. In Geneva, the paper adds, the UN General Assembly adopted a unanimous decision calling on the Security Council to take the necessary steps for the convening of an international conference for peace. French President Francois Mitterrand and his foreign minister have called on the five permanent members of the UN Security Council to put the UN General Assembly resolution into effect. [passage omitted]

For its part, AL-AHRAM says that Washington has finally accepted the PLO's repeatedly declared stand and, after a long denial, found it to have met the three major U.S. conditions, consequently opening a door that had long been shut against dialogue with the PLO. However, the paper adds, at this stage it would be incompatible with sound political practice if Washington were to keep further conditions secret and then announce them later on, thus creating new obstacles, or to harbor preconditions such as the rejection of a Palestinian state, despite its international legitimacy. This would defeat the purpose of the dialogue, get it into labyrinths, and show that this dialogue was initiated as merely a face-saving measure, the paper notes.

What is worth noting here, the paper adds, is that Washington originally demanded that Middle East talks should get underway without preconditions. If this is the case, Washington should apply the same rule to its dialogue with the PLO and, therefore, it should not have stated in advance that its acceptance of a dialogue with the PLO does not mean recognition of a Palestinian state. The paper notes that Shultz' emphasis on the fact that the future of the West Bank and Gaza will be determined in the course of negotiations is acceptable. However, it cautions that the current U.S.-Palestinian dialogue must set a model for future negotiations, and that Washington must not announce any preconditions, particularly since it is not a direct party to the conflict.

AL-AHRAM concludes by saying that Washington's decision to start a dialogue with the PLO means that its commitment to the position adopted by Kissinger in 1975 has expired, thus throwing the door wide open for the United States to act in complete freedom, after Washington's position had been bound in shackles. These shackles have caused embarrassment for Washington worldwide lately, when many believed Washington itself had been setting up barriers against its interests and sacrificing its own standing and principles to protect Israel aginst the deluge of justice.

Commentary on PLO-U.S. Dialogue, Israeli Stand

NC1812100488 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0655 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA)—Cairo papers assert today that Israel is expected to commit brutal and

frenzied acts against the defenseless Palestinian people in the occupied territories, now that the United States has agreed to enter into a dialogue with the PLO. The papers note that Israeli intransigence reached its zenith after Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat's speech at the UN General Assembly in Geneva and the U.S. decision, and point out that Israel had announced it would not recognize the PLO even if the United States recognized it.

AL-AKHBAR says that the Tel Aviv authorities now resemble a frantic dog which finds itself assailed on all sides, even by its master who used to feed it and was eager to preserve its safety and peace of mind. The paper points out that the Israeli occupation forces' massacre in Nabulus in the occupied West Bank on 16 December, in which 23 Palestinians were killed or wounded, is confirmation to the world of the fact from which Tel Aviv seeks to absolve itself in every way it can. This fact is that a decisive and quick end must be put to a tyrannical occupation that cannot survive without its modern weapons, which are used against people who have nothing but stones with which to defend their entity.

The paper notes that the decision, which Washington made under immense international pressure, has totally upset Israel's equilibrium and left Shamir and his gang naked in the face of overwhelming international public opinion. International opinion is united for the first time in supporting the just cause of a people who demand nothing more than the right to live in freedom and peace on their own land, of which the tyrant is trying to deprive them by force.

For its part, AL-AHRAM newspaper asserts that Israel will reject all the new trends shown by Washington and the PLO outright, especially since Israel announced through Shamir that it will not recognize the PLO even if America does. The paper says Israel has not recognized the PLO and will not do so, even if the latter were to tell the world a million times that it recognizes Israel's existence. The paper points out that Israel's non-recognition of the PLO, despite the latter's recognition of Israel's existence, affirms that Israel does not recognize the existence of the Palestinian people or their rights to territory and a homeland of their own, simply because the Palestinian people have chosen the PLO as their sole legitimate representative.

The paper says that this Israeli thinking represents an overt and preemptive aggression, which Israeli's allies, especially the United States, must take into account after the recent change in the U.S. position. The paper urges Washington to probe the possibility of Israel's recognition of the PLO after the latter's recognition of Israel. The paper says that Washington should persuade Israel to resort to international legitimacy and agree to join the rest of the world in the peace process, now that it has become completely isolated. Israel's insistence on or renunciation of its intransigence will decide whether a conflict breaks out, threatening everyone's interests, or a peace is established in the interests of the region's countries as well as of the international community.

AL-JUMHURIYAH newspaper, however, asserts that the U.S.-Palestinian meeting in Tunis on Friday achieved three positive results. They are the joint declaration of a desire to give impetus to the peace process in the Middle East; the breaking of the accumulated ice between the two parties; and the announcement that dialogue will be resumed at further meetings in the coming weeks. The paper expresses the belief that the agreement to pursue the dialogue between the United States and the PLO makes it incumbent on President-elect George Bush's administration to assume its responsibility by actively participating in the resolution of the conflict.

This process should be based on international criteria, foremost among which are the Geneva UN General Assembly resolutions which explictly called for an international peace conference sponsored by the United States and attended by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The paper lauds Bush's statement in which he announced his wish to activate the peace process after he takes office in January. It also urges the Arabs to capitalize on the positive U.S.-Palestinian position and to take care that its continuation is guaranteed. It adds that the Arabs should also seek to forestall any impediments or surprises, especially since the diplomatic battle is going to be a long and arduous one.

U.S. Should Support Conference

NC1912101188 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0650 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Cairo, 19 Dec (MENA)—In their comments today, the AL-AKHBAR and AL-AHRAM newspapers urge the U.S. Administration not merely to hold a dialogue with the PLO but also to abandon its opposition to an international conference on peace in the Middle East, now that all forces, especially the nonaligned ones, have unanimously decided that this is the best and safest course for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

AL-AKHBAR says that although the U.S. Government has finally agreed to hold a dialogue or negotiations with the Palestinians after refusing to do so for 13 years, Washington's stand on the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East is still incomprehensible and illogical, especially as this conference has become the universal demand of all states, regardless of creed and tendency.

AL-AKHBAR adds that the pretexts and reason reiterated by U.S. officials to justify their refusal to hold the international conference—a refusal which runs counter all logic—are the same ones being used by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and his aides, who realize that

any neutral international conference committed to international laws and the UN Charter will not accept the continuation of the forcible occupation of Palestinian territories for another single day.

AL-AHRAM says that all international sources, above all responsible Palestinian sources, unanimously agree that Egypt played a remarkable and historic role in convincing the United States to stop its boycott of the PLO and to begin a constructive dialogue with it. This role is in complete accord with Egypt's policy of embracing the Palestinian cause and making dear sacrifices in order to promote it and place it at the top of the list of Egyptian and Arab priorities.

AL-AHRAM adds that despite all the frustrating manifestations that have accompanied the long march, the U.S. change of attitude means that from now on it will be possible to move forward in the direction of justice. Whatever is possible should le accepted for the time being, until there are new developments. Such developments should be marked by moderation and a desire to acknowledge the legitimate rights of all the parties to the conflict within the framework of human, legal, and international principles. They should also be marked by wisdom, rationalism, and absolute faith in the possibility of achieving peace. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Mitterrand Comments on Franco-African Summit

LD1612145888 Rabat MAP in English 1225 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Casablanca, Dec 16. (MAP)—The French-African conference is active and is concerned with current problems, enriched by the various exchanges it raises, and concerned with finding solutions to the common problems facing the countries participating in it, said President Francois Mitterrand of France.

In an interview with the Moroccan pro-governmental daily "MAROC SOIR" on the occasion of the 15th summit currently taking place here, President Mitterrand said the fact to convene this summit, for the first time in a Maghreban country, testifies that the conference has become a living and attractive institution.

To a question on raw materials' prices that Western countries pay according to the market, President Mitterrand explained that France alone cannot modify the data of the international market but that it ceaselessly denounces the dangers of the current situation and unveils the negative impacts of the situation both on developing and on developed countries.

France can make practical proposals to remedy to the major shortcomings of the current market whose big variations perturb world economy, President Mitterrand said pointing out that the EEC had taken into account these proposals when it set up, in the context of the Lome conventions, the STABEX and SYSMIN mechanisms. The EEC has, during negotiations, increased means and will as part of the Lome IV convention, improve the functioning of these mechanisms the French president said adding that the IMF compensation actions and those of the structural adjustment [word indistinct] were increased at France's initiative. [sentence as received]

France has also backed the creation of a common fund for raw materials when proposed by the UNCTAD (UN Conference for Trade and Development), Mitterrand said before specifying that the fund will become operational shortly.

France's proposal to cancel the debts of the least developed countries had been accepted by the 7 most industrialized countries during their last meeting in Toronto, Canada, and other member countries of the "Club de Paris" have adopted the same measures, the French president said.

Regarding his own initiative calling on the international community to take in charge the big works destined to the protection of men and lands, President Mitterrand said it is a necessary to protect some countries and some populations from national disasters such as the ones threatening Bangladesh or other African and Asian countries.

Dealing again with the issue of the collapse of the raw materials prices and the specific case of Ivory Coast which was confronted with huge problems following the drop of cacao price on the world market, President Mitterrand said he had denounced the lack of organization of raw materials world market for years and proposed the setting up of regulating mechanisms as well as special funds to alleviate the dramatic effects of price fluctuations on developing countries' economies.

He reaffirmed that France was determined to grant a significant assistance to Ivory Coast to help it stabilize the situation and reactivate its economy.

Ties With Burkina Faso Considered Restored

LD1712172188 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] In a statement to Burkinabe Television, King Hassan said that as of now we consider that diplomatic relations between Morocco and Burkina Faso have been resumed, and an exchange of ambassadors between the two countries will take place soon. His majesty added that he had extended an invitation to the Burkinabe president, Mr Blaise Campaore, to pay a working visit to the Kingdom of Morocco in order to further bolster and give momentum to ties between the two countries.

[Begin King Hassan recording in French] We have (?spoken) [words indistinct]. We have found the relations are in good shape, that cooperation is perhaps in less good shape, and [words indistinct] to deepen it, and

exchange ambassadors. [words indistinct] (?I hope) that the president will give us the pleasure of coming, of paying a working visit to Morocco [words indistinct]. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Relations Established With Seychelles

LD1712212888 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Morocco and the Republic of Seychelles have decided to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level beginning today.

In this concern, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation has issued the following statement:

Because of their joint wish to consolidate and strengthen the ties of friendship and cooperation between the Moroccan and Seychelles peoples, the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Government of the Republic of Seychelles decided to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level from 17 December 1988.

The exchange of ambassadors will take place on a date to be determined by joint agreement.

Sudan

'Technical' Talks Held With Ethiopia

EA1612202288 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1455 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Technical discussions began this morning between the Sudanese side led by Defense Minister General 'Abd al-Majid Hamid Khalil and the Ethiopian side led by Shewandagn Belete, member of the Political Council of the WPE Central committee. [passage omitted] Official talks between the Sudanese and Ethiopian sides began yesterday evening led by Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and his Ethiopian counterpart Fikre Selassie Wogderes.

Al-Mahdi Encourages Peaceful Ties With Ethiopia

EA1812173088 Khartoum SUNA in English 0915 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Khartoum, 18th Dec - Premier Sadiq al-Mahdi has expressed Sudan's determination to maintain good neighbourly relations with all its neighbours in a bid to realise common interests in the region. Al-Mahdi was addressing a festival organised Friday in honour of a visiting Ethiopian delegation by the Ummah Party. Al-Mahdi said in his speech that development and stability cannot be achieved without peace.

"Peace is a valuable dream of all nations so the African leaders are urged to work for it", he said.

He asserted that Sudan was keen to solve its internal problems through dialogue and that it has already started great steps in this connection. He said that many development plans in both Sudan and Ethiopia would not be achieved without elimination of all causes of tension in the two countries. He said Sudan was firmly working to realise peace and achieve those interests and that the positive attitude showed by Ethiopia in this regard "would help achieve that goal with the quickest possible steps".

On the other hand, the Ethiopian official, Premier Fikre Selassie, has hailed the Ethio-Sudanese relation which he described as "characterised by joint struggle in the face of foreign influence". He reaffirmed that his government was working for the removal of all [words indistinct] destruction in one country affects the other, Selassie said.

Ethiopia Requests Help With Eritrean Crisis

EA1812143388 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1300 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Ethiopian Prime Minister Fikre Selassie has asked the Sudanese Government to contribute to solving the Eritrean problem which, he said, was threatening Ethiopian security. He expressed his country's full readiness to advance the peace process between Sudan and the Garang movement. Dr 'Umar Nur al-Da'im, minister of finance and economic planning, stressed the role of Ethiopia in furthering peace efforts in Sudan and working for the convening of the constitutional conference.

Al-Mahdi Receives Opposition Politicians

EA1812205988 Khartoum SUNA in English 1018 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Khartoum, 18 Dec—Premier al-Sadiq al-Mahdi yesterday met representatives of the Union of Sudanese African Parties (USAP) led by Elyaba James Surur to review peace efforts and ways of joining the efforts of both government and opposition in this regard. Surur has described the meeting as being frank and that it tackled peace moves with neighbouring states, daily "AL-AYYAM" reported.

Border Talks To Be Held With CAR

EA1812173888 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1300 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The Central African Government has shown understanding regarding the explanations conveyed by the Sudanese Foreign Ministry about the border between the two countries. The Central African foreign minister promised to urge his government to speed up the convening of meetings of the joint committee of the two countries on a date and at a place to be determined through diplomatic channels.

This was said by Mr Taj al-Sirr Muhammad Salih, Sudanese minister of state in the Foreign Ministry and member of the Sudanese delegation to the Franco-African summit conference.

His excellency said following his meeting with the Central African foreign minister that they had discussed the question of delineating the border between the two countries. He added that the matter could be solved in the framework of the joint committee of the two countries. He stressed Sudan's agreement on convening the committee meeting.

Captured MiG 'Will Not Remain Idle'

EA1812163388 (Clandestine) Radio of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in Arabic 1300 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Unattributed commentary from the "On the Sudanese Street" program]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] The SPLA has captured a jet fighter. The Sudanese have always accused the SPLA of involving foreign countries in the war, although the SPLA has been using against Al-Sadiq's forces heavy weapons captured from them which Al-Sadiq's forces acquired from abroad.

So now a MiG-23 has been captured and certainly this Mig will not remain idle; it will be used. If tomorrow it raided Khartoum or another town, people should not complain that the SPLA has acquired a foreign aircraft. We have taken the aircraft from Sadiq. Let this be known to Muhammad Chuol and Al-Sadiq.

Al-Mirghani on DUP-SPLA Peace Plan

LD1612153988 Khartoum SUNA in English 1015 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Khartoum [no date as received]—The patron of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, yesterday said his party and the ummah have initially agreed on the DUP-SPLA peace initiative and said all parties in the capital and the various regions will go on procession in support of the peace initiative. A peace procession is scheduled next week by several partisan supporters, particularly leftist, Southern Sudan parties and the DUP.

Al-Mirghani said his party will meet the forces supporting peace realisation at the assembly and the different trade unions in the country to inform them on the DUP-SPLA peace initiative and the new developments in this regard.

Al-Mirghani, who was addressing a DUP gathering here yesterday, said he has recently received a message from the SPLM leadership, urging the DUP to work for peace and to ingore "provocations".

Commenting on the timing of the proposed constitutional conference, Al-Mirghani stressed that this matter could not be a stumbling-block before the convening of the conference, although earnest efforts are underway to hold it soon, he said. A technical committee from the Sudanese Armed Forces and the SPLA would have to tackle the cease-fire implementation, as has been agreed upon in the DUP-SPLA peace initiative.

Tunisia

President Ben Ali Receives PLO Representative

LD1512233588 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 2300 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Yesterday evening [15 December] in the Palace of the Republic in Carthage, in the presence of Habib Ben Yahia, secretary of state for foreign affairs, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali received Mr Hakim Bal'awi, PLO representative in Tunis, who informed the head of state about the latest developments regarding the Palestinian question.

Western Sahara

Polisario Warns International Rally Participants

LD1612201088 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1800 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] In a communique issued in Paris today, Friday, the representation of the Polisario Front in France announces that it has just learned that an international rally involving trucks on the route from Tangiers in Morocco to Dakhla in the Saharan Republic is being prepared in Morocco. If this rally, which basically will involve French people who love great adventure, goes ahead as planned it could result in incidents detrimental to the life and property of the participants.

The Polisario Front recalls that it has always said that the Western Sahara was a war zone and specifies that it refuses to accept any possible responsibility for any incidents which this rally might cause. At the same time, it draws foreigners' attention to the seriousness of the danger to which they are exposing themselves by venturing into the area.

Intra-Gulf Affairs

GCC Aide on Peace, U.S. Stand, Egypt's Role

PM1512104288 Muscat 'UMAN in Arabic
12 Dec 88 p 11

[Unattributed interview with GCC Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs Sayf ibn Hashil al-Maskari in Riyadh; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] [Interviewer] Will the GCC states participate in the rebuilding process in Iran and Iraq, and to what extent?

[Al-Maskari] The two parties have not yet reached an agreement on permanent peace. Negotiations are still at an early stage. The two sides have not yet officially asked us to contribute to rebuilding what the war destroyed. So it would be premature to discuss this now. There is, however, a desire within the private sector among the GCC states to take part and invest in the rebuilding process in both countries. In response to an invitation from Iraq, a number of businessmen from GCC states visited Baghdad and discussed the possibility of their taking part. But, as I have just said, no official request has been made.

[Interviewer] In view of the difficulties and delay facing the peace process, do you not fear a resurgence of fighting?

[Al-Maskari] I have said more than once that both sides have a resolute desire for peace. Therefore, I do not believe that Iraq and Iran have any intention of resuming the fighting, especially after their bitter experience over the past 8 years. [passage omitted]

[Interviewer] What role can the GCC play to bring about a change in the U.S. stand on the Palestinian initiative?

[Al-Maskari] The GCC states have always worked for the Palestinian cause—even before the GCC was established—through bilateral or multilateral meetings with European states or the United States. The recent U.S. stand has caused frustration. Certainly, contacts will be made with the United States and the U.S. Administration in an attempt to convince it that such a stand will not be an encouragement to the new tendency to establish peace in the region. It would prove to hardliners the futility of the search for peaceful solutions to establish peace. In this connection we must mention the European respose to the Palestinian initiative, which we can say is positive. [passage omitted]

[Interviewer] Do you feel that in the wake of the recent rapid sequence of developments, the Arab arena is now ready for an Arab summit including Egypt?

[Al-Maskari] There are numerous issues which actually need a collective political weight. We can see that the Arab states are holding continuous consultations at the highest levels, not to clear the atmosphere—as we have already passed that stage—but to bring about a kind of consensus in order to convene the ordinary Arab summit. I would like here to stress the need for Egypt's participation in that summit, because Egypt has always shown that it has never abandoned its national role or its role with respect to Arab issues. Egypt's recent activities and role provide a strong justification for its return to the Arab League to assume its natural position. [passage omitted]

Officials Arrive in Bahrain for GCC Talks

Kuwaiti Amir Arrives

NC1912073388 [Editorial Report] Riyadh Television Service in Arabic, in a linkup with Bahrain Television Service, at 0630 GMT ON 19 December broadcasts a live relay of the arrival of Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the amir of Kuwait, at Bahrain International Airport, to attend the GCC summit conference. The approximately 30-minute relay begins with shots of the jumbo jet plane parking at the airport. The amir is then seen descending the staircase, at the bottom of which he is received and embraced by Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman al Khalifah. An official ceremony is held, during which the two countries' national anthems are played, a 21-gun salute is fired, and a guard of honor is reviewed. The Kuwaiti amir then greets Bahraini amirs, ministers, senior officials, and foreign ambassadors, who have lined up to welcome him. The Kuwaiti and Bahraini rulers are then shown proceeding to the airport lounge for a brief rest period, and then departing the airport in a motorcade to where the Kuwaiti amir will be staying during the GCC summit conference.

UAE President Arrives

NC1912092388 [Editorial Report] Manama Television Service in Arabic, relayed via Saudi Television at 0738 GMT on 19 December begins a 37-minute live relay of the arrival of UAE President Shaykh Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan from Bahrain International Airport. Shaykh Zayid's jet is shown parking on the tarmac, where Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah is on hand to receive the UAE president. The UAE president is then shown descending the stairs and embracing the Bahraini amir. The official reception ceremony starts with the playing of the two countries' national anthems. While the two leaders are reviewing the guards of honor, a 21-gun salute is fired. The UAE president is then shown greeting Bahraini officials and foreign ambassadors who have lined up to welcome him. The UAE president and Bahraini amir are seen entering the airport lounge for a short break, after which the relay ends showing the two leaders departing from the airport in a motorcade to the residence of the UAE president.

Qatari Amir Arrives

NC1912095588 [Editorial Report] Manama Television Service in Arabic, relayed via Riyadh television, at 0848 GMT on 19 December begins a 33-minute live relay from Bahrain International airport of the arrival of Qatari Amir Shaykh Khalifah ibn Hamad Al Thani for the GCC summit conference. The relay opens with shots of the amir's jet standing on the tarmac. The Qatari amir then descends the stairs and embraces the Bahraini amir. The national anthems of Qatar and Bahrain are played and a 21-gun salute follows. The Qatari leader then reviews the guard of honor, accompanied by the Bahraini amir, and greets the senior Bahraini and foreign officials awaiting him. The two leaders are then seen entering the airport lounge for a short break, after which they leave the airport in a motorcade for the residence where the Qatari amir will be staying during the summit.

Oman's Sultan Qabus Arrives

NC1912104588 [Editorial Report] Manama Television Service in Arabic, relayed via Riyadh television, at 0950 GMT on 19 December begins a 38-minute live relay from Bahrain International airport of the arrival of Sultan Qabus ibn Sa'id of Oman. The sultan's jet is shown standing on the tarmac, then Sultan Qabus descends the stairs and embraces Bahraini Amir Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah. After the two countries' national anthems are played and a 21-gun salute is fired, the Bahraini amir is shown accompanying his guest in an inspection of the guard of honor. The Omani sultan is then seen shaking hands with the Bahraini and foreign officials standing in line to welcome him, after which the two leaders are shown entering the airport lounge. After a short rest, the two leaders are shown leaving the airport in a motorcade for the place where the Omani sultan will be residing during his stay in Bahrain for the GCC summit meeting.

Gulf Newspapers Welcome U.S. Decision on PLO

JN1712165988 Manama WAKH in English 1520 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Manama, Dec 17 (GNA)—[Passage omitted] AL-WAHDA newspaper of Abu Dhabi welcomed Washington's acceptance to talk directly to the PLO—the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Commenting editorially on the subject, the paper said "since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United States for the first time adopted a positive decision towards the Middle East peace process and for the first time since 1967 Arab-Israel war, Washington put the horse in front of the wagon and decided to have an official dialogue with PLO far away from Arab and international mediators."

"Washington was rejecting the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people as it was ignoring the existence of the PLO—the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people for a period of 22 years." AL-WAHDA noted.

"We see Reagan and Shultz did not want to open a direct dialogue with the PLO, but they were forced to do so by the pressure of the international support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people crowned by the popular uprising in the occupied territories and the declaration of an independent Palestinian state in Algiers on Nov. 15, by the Palestinian National Council," it stressed.

Qatari newspapers dealt editorially today with the impact of the Palestinian-American dialogue which started in Tunis yesterday after a 12 year old boycott, on prospects for bringing about a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict through an international conference.

In this context, AL-'ARAB daily called on the Palestinian leadership to pursue a policy of decisiveness and caution in its contacts with the United States which may ask for concessions that no-one can accept or present.

AL-SHARQ daily expressed hope that Washington's decision to open a dialogue with the PLO would herald an end to the United States' hostile policies not only against the Palestine Liberation Organization but also against the Palestinian people's legitimate rights.

AL-RAYAH daily contended that Washington's decision to open direct talks with the PLO has struck the Zionist enemy with an acute cause of hysterical fever having seen its aggressive intentions and expansionist policies imposed on the entire world.

Under the title "A Major Advance," daily GULF TIMES said in part: "The Reagan administration has taken the right step in deciding to open dialogue with the PLO, one of the major representative parties involved in the Middle East conflict." [passage omitted]

Bahrain

Newspaper Welcomes U.S. Decision on PLO

JN1612091288 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0740 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Manama, 16 Dec (WAKH)—[Passage omitted] A Bahraini newspaper has said the U.S. decision to initiate a direct dialogue with the PLO is a political victory for the Palestinian resistance movement. Through its well-planned strategy for political action, this movement has managed to impose its presence and also to prompt the U.S. Administration to deal with the PLO in its capacity as the only party qualified to speak in the Palestinian people's name and to hold negotiations on the cause of this people.

The newspaper AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ asserts that this political victory puts a final end to the illusions of searching for alternative leaderships for the PLO as well as the illusions on the possibility of excluding the PLO from the peace process. However, the paper expresses the belief that U.S. dialogue with the PLO is not a goal in itself. The value of this dialogue depends on subsequent developments and on whether it will reflect a radical change in the future U.S. stand in terms of a frank and specific recognition of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, led by their right to establish an independent state.

AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ urges the Arab world to intensify its support for the Palestinian move and exert pressures on all international levels in order to turn the positive political developments into tangible practical results which will pave the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Government Welcomes Decision on U.S.-PLO Dialogue

JN1712125688 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1215 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Doha, 17 Dec (WAKH)—The State of Qatar has welcomed the U.S. decision to start a dialogue with the PLO and considered this decision an important and essential step in the right direction toward resolving the Palestine question in particular and the Middle East problem in general.

QNA cited an official Qatari source as saying that Qatar believes that the U.S. decision came because the United States is finally convinced of the honest peaceful Palestinian intentions and orientations. The source added that Qatar believes that this decision constitutes a great turning point in the efforts to boost the peace process and will greatly contributre toward expediting the convocation of an international conference to settle the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The source added that while Qatar appreciates the current U.S. Administration's positive stand, it hopes that the new administration will exert further efforts to develop this stand to match the seriousness of the Middle East problem in order to achieve a just and comprehensive solution to this problem on the basis of restoring the legitimate Palestinian rights without which no peace can be achieved in this area of the world.

Minister Returns From UN General Assembly Debate

JN1812080688 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0630 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Doha, 18 Dec (WAKH)—Shaykh Ahmad ibn Sayf Al Thani, Qatari minister of state for foreign affairs, returned to Doha from Geneva this morning. Shaykh Ahmad ibn Sayf led the Qatari delegation to the UN General Assembly [UNGA] meetings which were held on the Palestine question at the UN European headquarters.

United Arab Emirates

President Interviewed on Summit Expectations

JN1912091288 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0530 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Manama, 18 (WAKH)—His Highness Shakyh Zayid ibn Sultan Al Nuhayyan, UAE president, has described the GCC march as blessed and sound. He said the people of the area are confidently awaiting their leaders to represent the brotherly links binding the GCC states—rulers and peoples.

In an interview with WAKH, His Highness Shaykh Zayid said: "What we expect from the ninth GCC summit which begins tomorrow is what a brother expects from his faithful brother," especially since many years have passed since the GCC establishment during which many things have been accomplished to bolster GCC collective action. [passage omitted]

Following is the text of the interview with the UAE president:

Question: Your Highness, what are your hopes and expectations about the ninth GCC summit which begins in Bahrain tomorrow?

The president: What we expect from the summit is what a brother expects from his faithful brother. We are no longer beginners in the GCC as many years have passed since its establishment. During these years we accomplished many things which bolster our collective march in this area. We also faced matters which we did not previously think of. Most importantly, we realized that brothers need each other badly and that nobody can do without his brothers.

Our meeting in Bahrain is to maintain this edifice to which we have all contributed and whose strength we are eager to maintain. This edifice has become a prominent experience on the Gulf, Arab, Islamic, and world levels. I hope our meeting with their majesties and highnesses, the GCC leaders, will be successful and will achieve good results.

Question: Your Highness, what is your assessment of the GCC march over the past years?

The president: It is a blessed and sound march. We found nothing in this march but what maintains mutual respect among brothers and benefits our peoples who look to us with hope and confidence to reflect the brotherly links binding our countries—rulers and peoples.

Question: Your Highness, what is your perception of the future relations between the Gulf states and Iran after the war and how do you view the progress of the negotiations between Iraq and Iran?

The president: The Gulf states have good relations with Iran, although the war atmosphere negatively affected the relations of some with Iran. We believe that strengthening

relations and goodneighborliness with Iran is necessary. Also, bolstering rapprochement between Iraq and Iran is a duty which we all must work for through the GCC and the United Nations. We want to be a support for our brothers in rapprochement and renouncing hostility and war so that their disputes can be resolved through dialogue and logic to reach peace and reconstruct what the war has destroyed. To achieve that, we must exert every possible effort.

As for the progress of negotiations between Iraq and Iran, although there are no signs of progress in the peace efforts between the two countries, we believe that good offices between the two sides can boost these efforts to draw up a peace formula between the two neighboring Muslims.

Question: What is your highness' opinion of the new U.S. stand on holding a dialogue with the PLO, and what is your assessment of the current Palestinian political action?

The president: I believe that the new U.S. move must be strongly supported. As a superpower, the United States is dutybound to perform its duty fully. Its duty is to support truth and justice. The current Palestinian action needs great support from fraternal Arab countries. They should provide support and backing so that the newborn Palestinian state can stand on its feet and confront challenges with a collective force.

Question: Your Highness, how do you view the means to resolve the Lebanese crisis following your appeal and call for an emergency Arab summit?

The president: Lebanon badly needs the support of its sincere brothers to save it from its ordeal. My appeal and call for an emergency Arab summit was to save Lebanon from its miserable situation after I saw that delay and procrastination in halting destruction and bloodshed in any Arab country is a loss for this country and for all of us and adds divisions to the greater Arab homeland. Emanating from our concern that this greater homeland continues to be sound and safe, we must move actively as a united nation to quicly save this sisterly country, which is badly in need of immediate rescue.

I hope that Almighty God will guide us along the sound path and make us constantly concerened about each other and about meeting the Arab nation's needs before it is too late. I hope that we will exert our utmost to solve problems to have a strong and united Arab nation.

Minister Welcomes U.S. Decision on PLO

JN1612201088 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1915 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Abu Dhabi, 16 Dec (WAKH)—Rashid 'Abdallah, UAE minister of state for foreign affairs, has welcomed the U.S. decision to open direct dialogue withthe PLO. He expressed hope that this dialogue between the two sides in particular, and between the PLO and other countries in general, will progress until international support for the Palestinian people's rights is completed.

In statements made upon his return to Abu Dhabi from Geneva tonight, Rashid 'Abdallah praised the outcome of the UN General Assembly's extraordinary session on the Palestinian question, which concluded its meetings yesterday. He said that the session has achieved its objectives and is proof of the world's harboring of the Palestinian cause and the option of peace. [passage indistinct]

Iranian Foreign Minister Arrives 18 Dec

LD1812182888 Tehran IRNA in English 1743 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 18, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, on his way back from China made a brief stop over in the UAE Sunday visiting the tiny sheikhdoms of Dubayy and Sharjah, where he discussed mutual ties and Persian Gulf security.

In his meeting with Sharjah ruler Shaykh Sultan ibn Muhammad al-Qasimi, Velayati called for cooperation "to safeguard our common interests," and added, "we should not allow others to come into the Persian Gulf and make decisions at the expense of littoral states."

The Sharjah ruler, lauding the Islamic revolution, termed relations between Persian Gulf Arab states and the Islamic republic as of "great importance." He said the incidents over the past few years have made Iran "more experienced and more resistant" and the Islamic republic is now in a position of strength in the region.

In Dubayy, Velayati called on UAE Economy and Finance Minister Hamdan ibn Rashid who is also Dubayy's deputy ruler and discussed with him latest developments concerning the implementation of U.N. Resolution 598.

The foreign minister during his three day official visit to China held talks on bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interest.

Meets With Sharjah Ruler

JN1812093488 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0845 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Al-Shariqah, 18 Dec (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Dr Sultan ibn Muhammad al-Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council member and Sharjah ruler, received here today Iranian Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati who is currently visiting the UAE.

The meeting was attended by Shaykh Faysal ibn Khalid ibn Sultan al-Qasimi, commander of the Sharjah Amiri Guards; and Mostafa Haeri-Fumani, the Iranian ambassador to the UAE.

London Paper Interviews Foreign Minister 3 Dec

PM1612141888 London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 12 Dec 88 pp 12-13

[Report on interview with Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, by Fu'ad Matar in Baghdad on 3 December]

[Text] When I interviewed Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz in his office in Baghdad on 3 December 1988 I was eager to ask him some questions about Iraq's assessment of the PNC decisions and the U.S. position represented by the refusal to grant 'Arafat an entry visa, and the nature of Arab political action in Geneva during the United Nations General Assembly [UNGA] session on Palestine.

I will briefly list Tariq 'Aziz' answers to these questions as follows:

—Our Palestinian brothers briefed us on their intention to proclaim the Palestinian state. We adopted a resolute stand supporting whatever the PLO decides.

—When the Palestinian state decision was made, we supported it. When we knew that the PLO was seeking recognition, we recognized the state. We supported the PLO's options in Algiers and called on the Arab foreign ministers to attend the UNGA session in New York as an expression of Arab support for the Palestinian cause. When the United States refused Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] a visa we issued a statement condemning that unjust, illogical, and illegal U.S. stand. And we will take part in the UNGA session in Geneva.

—The PLO's option—that is, the proclamation of the Palestinian state—is both logical and sound.

—World public opinion and most governments, including those of U.S. allies, welcomed the PNC resolutions in Algiers and considered them an important step toward convening the international conference. They praised the PLO's and its political leadership's ability to take courageous and balanced decisions. The U.S. stand alone has still not considered these decisions. If the United States wants to display even minimal impartiality it must consider these decisions. But if it chooses, as in the past, to be biased toward Israel, the United States will then lose its role as an influential and positive mediator or partner in the peace process in the Middle East. Then it will be isolated politically from its allies.

—The U.S. stand is not only illogical. It is also biased and not gaining any credibility, even in the United States.

—It would have been better to hold the session in New York instead of Geneva, because the General Assembly is based in New York. True, we insisted that our negotiations with Iran be held in Geneva instead of New York, but this is a different case, as we are conducting negotiations. As for the Palestinian issue, there is a UNGA session, and obviously it should be held in New York. We decided on Geneva for geographical, rather than political, reasons.

—The General Assembly mainly expresses support, because it does not usually adopt the crucial resolutions on the issue of war and peace. The Security Council adopts such resolutions.

—The U.S. allies' stand on the UNGA session in question differ from U.S. position. For instance, the French stand has progressed. The British stand, though different from France's, is remote from the U.S. stand. It is the United States alone that has adopted an illogical stand. It refuses to recognize the PLO or talk with it. This stand is supported by Israel and the Zionists. Non-Zionist Americans do not back this position. The Reagan administration is held responsible for that stand because it supports it. But it is clear that Shultz played the major part in that stand.

—We believe that the Arab world must send a message to the United States via the Arab foreign ministers' participation in Geneva. We originally suggested that this should take place in New York so that the message would be addressed to the world as a whole. But we are now requested to direct the message to the world and the United States, whose position we feel has been condemned by all Arabs. Support for the PLO and its Algiers decisions constitutes a message to the United States, especially to the new administration which will take office on 20 January 1989.

—The message we are talking about is not a written one. It must include a call to deal with the PLO and consider it a major party in the peace process in the Middle East, as the Middle East conflict cannot be resolved without recognizing the Palestinian people's right to establish their own independent state, like other states in the region. This must be said in Geneva and must be heard by the U.S. Administration.

—The Reagan administration used to claim that the Palestinian state idea enjoyed insuffient support from some Arab states. They told the press that the independent state idea lacked Arab consensus. They used the Arab consensus question as an excuse for not supporting the idea or dealing with the PLO. But now that the PLO has proclaimed the Palestinian state, which has been recognized by all Arab states except Syria, this past talk is superfluous—that is, if we considered such talk true, and not merely U.S. claims.

There is now a tangible fact, namely, that the Arab states support the Palestinian state, and we are going to Geneva to reaffirm this support. It is the United States alone that rejects the establishment of the Palestinian state. Nor does Israel, of course. The picture is crystal clear now. It is also clear that the agreement of that large number of Arab

states to take part in the UNGA session in Geneva means that the world's states, with various degrees of positiveness, want to deal with the Palestinian decision.

—Holding the UNGA session in Geneva instead of New York is a great challenge to the Arab states, and they must confront that challenge steadfastly.

—In my opinion most Arab foreign ministers will participate in the session. I believe that more will come to Geneva than would have attended the session had it been held in New York. The foreign ministers are the governments' explorers, and this tour will have a different flavor at the diplomatic action level.

—I believe that Egypt's recognition of the Palestinian state was not the reason for the U.S. Administration' refusal to grant 'Arafat an entry visa. The reason was was the Reagan administration's desire to place obstacles in the way of the next administration—the Bush administration—by declaring more support for the Zionist lobby and Israel.

—The most serious aspect of Shultz' action is that it will make it difficult for the next administration to open up to the PLO and the Arab position. In this connection I can say that my dealings with Shultz over the the Gulf security issue and the Iraq-Iran conflict were good, except for the Irangate case, which he opposed, though not resolutely enough to adopt a firm stand on it. He was always understanding, but with regard to the Middle East issue, he was different. He was stubborn before his plan, and even more so after its failure. I recall that at a dinner he gave for GCC foreign ministers on a yacht belonging to his friend, the publisher Forbes, we sat at the same table.

He was flanked by me and the Yemeni and Jordanian foreign ministers. Shultz began to talk about current world features. He said: Prospects of independence are emerging among racial and ethnic communities in the world. He was positive. I told him: Your view should also apply to the Palestinian people, because they are entitled to express their desire for the right to self-determination. His reply was not negative, and it seemed to me that he accepted that remark. But at the same time, the U.S. officials' stances are linked to their future political and financial plans. This phenomenon is attracting attention in the world's foremost state, where politicians are not always professional politicians.

Professionalism in politics depends sometimes on positive aspects. Politicians maintain a constant stance or approach. But if the politician was originally a businessman or is planning to become one or to work in a certain domain to satisfy his interests, he will then be unable to express a true political opinion. His concern will be what sort of company he will be working for, or in what capacity he will be dealing with it. All this will affect his political convictions and stands. This is a clear and notable phenomenon in in the world of U.S. politics and politicians.

Reportage on Talks With Jordanian Officials

Delegation Arrives 17 Dec

JN1712113088 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1047 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Dec (INA)—Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i arrived here today leading an official delegation to head the Jordanian side to the meetings of the joint Iraqi-Jordanian committee for economic, trade, and technical cooperation scheduled to begin later today.

In a statement to INA, Zayd al-Rifa'i said that his visit to Iraq is aimed at continuing consultations with the Iraqi brothers within the framework of the higher ministerial joint committee. He said the visit was also to discuss spheres of bilateral cooperation and means to consolidate it. He added that the bases of these talks are the same bases laid down by President Saddam Husayn and his brother His Majesty King Husayn.

He explained that during the meetings of the joint committee the Iraqi and Jordanian officials will review the steps and measures that have so far been implemented on economic integration between both countries. He said that the two sides will discuss new ideas and proposals to establish agricultural and industrial cooperation and joint companies in order to reach close and developed brotherly bilateral relations consistent with the instructions of the two leaders.

Zayd al-Rifa'i was received at the airport by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister; Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Hasan 'Ali, RCC member; ministers; and the Iraqi and Jordanian ambassadors.

Transport Minister on Talks

JN1712171888 Baghdad INA in English 1430 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad, Dec.17, INA—Mr. Muhammad Hamzah, Iraqi minister of transport and communications said the ministerial meeting of the 9th session of the Iraqi-Jordanian joint committee for economic, trade and technical cooperation, due to start here later today, "acquires special and outstanding importance because of developing Iraqi-Jordanian relations."

Speaking to INA today, the Iraqi minister said President Saddam Husayn and King Husayn of Jordan laid down strong and firm bases for relations between the two brotherly countries, guided by the faith they had in the importance of joint Arab action.

Referring to the development witnessed by Iraqi-Jordanian relations in various fields, Mr. Muhammad Hamzah said Iraq and Jordan, within the framework of developing relations, were linked now by multi-sided agreements. The agreements included those of The Iraqi-Jordanian Company for Industries and Amman-based

Overland Transport Company in addition to cooperation agreement between Iraqi and Jordanian airlines, operating maritime services between them and agreement on eliminating obstacles hindering the flow of commodities and goods and means of transport.

Iraq and Jordan also concluded agreements providing for cooperation in cultural, scientific, artistic and information fields added to them agreements on exchange of fellowships and expanding telephone and postal services via the microwave project, the minister pointed out. [sentence as received]

He expressed hope that meetings of the ninth session would contribute to reviving Iraqi and Jordanian markets by fully implementing the principle of economic integration, furthering volume of trade exchange, activating trade centres and exhibitions, developing agricultural and textile industries and opening the door to the private sector to contribute to the implementation of projects.

Transport Minister Sees Visitors

JN1712173988 Baghdad INA in English 1440 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad, Dec. 17, INA—Iraqi Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr. Muhammad Hamzah today conferred here with his visiting Jordanian counterpart, Khalid al-Haj Hasan and the Jordanian Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Hamdi al-Tabba'.

During the meeting, the ministers discussed means of promoting relations between the two countries in the industrial, trade and agricultural fields through deliberations of the joint Iraqi-Jordanian committee for technical, trade and economic cooperation. The ministers extolled the positive steps attained along the path of promoting relations between the two countries.

Messrs. Hamzah and Al-Tabba' will chair the Jordanian and Iraqi sides to the joint committee meetings.

President Receives Al-Rifa'i

JN1712173788 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] His Excellency leader President Saddam Husayn has received Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i. They discussed the strong relations binding the two fraternal states.

The meeting was attended by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, and the president's secretary.

Ramadan Meets With Al-Rifa'i

JN1712191488 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1810 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Dec (INA)—Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, met this evening with Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i.

They discussed fraternal bilateral relations and voiced deep satisfaction over the development of these relations. They also affirmed their serious desire to expand and increase bilateral cooperation in all spheres in order to help implement the directives of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and His Majesty King Husayn.

The meeting was attended by the Iraqi ambassador in Amman and the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad.

Joint Committee Meetings Begin

JN1712204588 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] The first session of the meetings of the joint higher Iraqi-Jordanian committee for economic, trade, and technical cooperation began in Baghdad this evening.

Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, led the Iraqi side to the first session of meetings; while Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i headed the fraternal Jordanian side.

At the beginning of the session, Taha Yasin Ramadan delivered a speech. He welcomed Zayd al-Rifa'i and members of his accompanying delegation, wishing them a good stay in Arab Iraq. He said:

The work of the Iraqi-Jordanian committee has realized advanced and distinguished formulas. What has been accomplished between the two fraternal states under the leaderships of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and His Majesty King Husayn is an example to be emulated by others who might study the formula approved and pursued to achieve joint Arab action. Certainly, this is a model whose success has been proved. Economic cooperation is the pillar for expanding the base of inter-Arab cooperation. We are feeling the success of this experience in light of the fraternal and developed atmosphere characterizing the relations binding our two fraternal states, as these relations are witnessing a large-scale expansion.

This is a source of pride for us and facilitates the achievement of the mission entailed in the joint action pertaining to each situation. Notwithstanding what we have accomplished so far, we hope that we will realize the desired ambition. Therefore, we find ourselves faced with a big responsibility regarding the expansion and development of bilateral cooperation, particularly in that realities have proved our ability to realize this, depending on our efforts and confidence in our ability to realize a better future.

Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i delivered a speech on the occasion expressing his pride and that of his accompanying delegation over visiting Iraq. He said: Arab Iraq, the Iraq of heroism and steadfastness, has restored to our Arab nation its glories and self-confidence. It has also fended off the dangers that used to pose threats to the Arab existence. We in Amman and Baghdad are united in purpose and stands. This has made us feel that we are not nationals of two states. This feeling is the driving force behind our efforts to build the desired edifice that His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and His Majesty King Husayn seek to create.

Zayd al-Rifa'i paid tribute to the distinguished fraternal bilateral relations that have made a great stride. He added that the two fraternal states seek to raise these relations to the desired level and that these relations have become a splendid example of fraternal relations, thanks to the directives of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and His Majesty King Husayn. He affirmed that the serious and honest desire to make our relations attain the ambitions desired for them will double our responsibilities. He added: We are confident of our ability to realize these ambitions.

The Iraqi side to the the session of talks comprised Transport and Communications Minister Muhammad Hamzah, Oil Minister 'Isam 'Abd al-Rahim, Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih, Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Karim Hasan Rida, Finance Minister Hikmat 'Umar Mukhaylif, the Foreign Ministry under secretary, and the Iraqi ambassador in Amman.

Attending the talks on the Jordanian side were Finance Minister Hanna 'Awdah; Industry and Trade Minister Hamdi al-Tabba'; Transportation and Communications Minister Khalid al-Haj Hasan; Energy Minister Dr Hisham al-Khatib; Dr Fayiz al-Tarawinah, minister of state for cabinet affairs; Muhammad al-Saqqaf, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and deputy chairman of the joint Jordanian-Iranian committee; and the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad.

Joint Committee Holds 2d Meeting

JN1812150888 Amman Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The joint Jordanian-Iraqi ministerial committee held its second round of talks in Baghdad today. Jordan's side was headed by Minister of Industry and Trade Hamdi al-Tabba' while the Iraqi side was led by Minister of Transport and Communications Muhammad Hamzah al-Zubaydi.

Mr al-Tabba' said the joint committee topics listed on the agenda were discussed with frankness in the light of the distinguished relations between both countries. Mr al-Zubaydi, in an interview with the JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY in Baghdad, said that the agreement has been reached to settle all pending issues. Meanwhile, the joint Jordanian-Iraqi higher committee will hold an extended session later today cochaired by Prime Minister Mr Zayd al-Rifa'i and First Deputy Iraqi Premier Mr Taha Yasin Ramadan for signing the minutes of the meetings.

Ramadan, Al-Rifa'i Review Talks

JN1812155488 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, today met with Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i. They reviewed the topics discussed by the subcommittees of the higher joint Iraqi-Jordanian committee for economic, trade, and technical cooperation.

Yasin and Al-Rifa'i expressed satisfation with the outcome of the meetings, which were characterized by serious intent and determination to find new prospects to help enhance existing relations between the two sisterly countries and develop these relations to an advanced level. The meeting was attened by the Iraqi ambassador in Jordan and the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad.

Ramadan, Al-Rifa'i Sign Minutes

JN1812181388 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1635 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 18 Dec (INA)—At the end of the joint Iraqi-Jordanian higher committee meetings, the two countries signed here today minutes of economic, trade, and technical cooperation crowning their exemplary fraternal relations.

The minutes, signed for Iraq by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, and for Jordan by Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i, cover cooperation in the fields of industry, transportation, communications, energy, mineral exploration, economy, trade, and banking as well as cooperation in the fields of culture, media, science and the arts. The two sides agreed to raise the level of trade exchange to $800 million over the next year, diversify the commodities exchanged, and increase the number of Iraqi trade centers in Jordan and Jordanian trade centers in Iraq, allowing these centers to sell commodities directly to the citizens of both countries. [passage omitted]

Delegation Departs

JN1812173888 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1710 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad, 18 Dec (INA)—Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i and the delegation accompanying him left Baghdad this evening after a 2-day visit to Iraq.

He was seen off at the airport by Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister; Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Hasan 'Ali, RCC member; a number of ministers; and the ambassadors of Iraq and Jordan in Baghdad and Amman.

'Last Obstacle' to Broad-Based Government Removed

TA1912153088 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1500 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] The last obstacle on the path toward a broad-based government has been removed. Our correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami reports that Minister Moshe Shahal and Knesset Member Dan Meridor have agreed that the Knesset Finance Committee chairmanship will go to the Alignment, but that the nomination will have to be approved in advance by Prime Minister Shamir.

The two major parties' negotiating teams are now beginning to formulate the agreement. The Alignment ministers will apparently convene tomorrow morning to ratify the agreement, after which Yitzhaq Shamir and Shim'on Peres will meet.

Our correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that at the Likud ministers meeting, Ministers Sharon and Moda'i adamantly objected to a broad-based government, while Ministers Levi and Arens spoke in favor of one. Ari'el Sharon accused his colleagues, saying that the Likud suffers from a historical inferiority complex versus the Labor Party, as well as a fear of taking the reigns to lead the country at a difficult time. Minister Sharon is not expected to participate in the talks the prime minister will hold today with representatives of the religious and right-wing parties.

Voices have been heard in the National Religious Party urging people to stay away from the meeting with Mr Shamir, if it turns out that the Likud and the Alignment have reached a formal agreement for the establishment of a broad-based government.

'Main Points' of Agreement

TA1912172988 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] The following are the main points of the Alignment-Likud agreement on setting up a broad-based government: An Alignment representative will be chairman of the Knesset Finance Committee, based on the approval of Yitzhaq Shamir and Shim'on Peres; eight settlements will be set up in the government's 1st year, with each settlement after that requiring the approval of the Treasury; the Treasury's approval will also be necessary for the transfer of funds to the ultraorthodox factions, based on commitments already made by the Likud; and both the Likud and the Alignment will have to agree to the coopting of any other party to the broad-based government. If one of the major parties leaves the government, there will be no attempt to set up a narrow-based government. Instead, new elections will be held.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1705 GMT adds: "The Council of Torah Sages convened tonight under the presidency of Rabbi Schach and decided that Degel Hatora will vote for the government, but will not join the coalition."]

Shamir Interviewed on 'Painful' U.S. Decision

TA1712091188 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0805 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir by political correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Ben-'Ami] Mr Prime Minister, last week something changed in Israeli-U.S. relations, following Washington's decision to initiate talks with the PLO.

[Shamir] Indeed, something happened. It was grave, hard, and painful. Over the past few years, the fabric of relations between Israel and the United States has developed to the point where the common interests, principles, and values became so deep and strong—and they still are strong, stable, and deep—that both countries were able to endure even very tough differences of opinion and political problems relating to the two countries. There is no need for me to recall past cases of such differences of opinion with the United States. Suffice it to mention the September 1982 Reagan initiative, or things that happened both before and after that. We have always said that the United States and Israel are allies. We have a pact. But at times, even allies experience deep differences of opinion. These, however, do not affect the pact itself. It continues, as does everything that derives from and is implied by it. All this continues.

Last week, something happened which again puts this principle to a serious test. The United States decided to engage in negotiations and maintain contacts with Israel's most extremist enemy, a terrorist organization—perhaps the foremost terrorist organization in recent history. The United States is known as the main and most important country waving the banner of the fight against terrorism. The United States has now decided to open contacts with an organization that waves the banner of terrorism all over the world, an organization that is Israel's worst enemy. It is consequently not surprising that this created a shock; it is not surprising that we are still analyzing and trying to fathom what has happened, why it happened, and what should be done in consequence.

[Ben-'Ami] Can you explain why the leading advocate of the fight against terrorism has decided to do this and enter a dialogue with a terror organization?

[Shamir] There are plenty of explanations. Secretary of State Shultz openly mentioned the intense and heavy pressure on the United States from many sides, including from domestic elements. A certain atmosphere is prevailing in the world, I would call it a fashionable trend—and we know some vogues can be wild and crazy—of sympathy toward that body, that terrorist organization which I, and I believe also many people throughout the world, think should remain a pariah. And yet the United States was swept by this wave.

[Ben-'Ami] Over the past few years, you used to say that we will never have a friendlier administration. But we will have to contend with a new administration. Yet Shultz, that true friend—and, I believe, also a personal friend of yours—has given you a rather nasty farewell gift.

[Shamir] It is true that it is painful. It hurts to receive such a blow from friends. But let us not get carried away. In the past, too, we took issue with our friends. I must say that even when we have differences of opinion, it is best to have them with friends.

[Ben-'Ami] In any event, Mr Prime Minister, we are being nudged into the uneasy position of political isolation. As the head of the Israeli political system, now that even our best friend is conducting contacts with the PLO, this erosion may also sweep Europe and may even include the U.S. Jews. And yet we remain alone.

[Shamir] Isolation is hard to bear and is usually negative. It is necessary to fight it. This time it was emphasized and highlighted even more, and we must fight it.

[Ben-'Ami] Perhaps we can do it by changing our policy toward the PLO?

[Shamir] Our policy must derive from our needs and interests. We cannot alter our attitude toward the PLO. The PLO is our worst and most extremist enemy. It is committed to the extermination of Israel. It has not yet changed this commitment. We have not heard even one word about revoking the Palestinian Covenant. On the contrary. Here and there we can hear a denial that any such intention ever existed. The PLO is an organization for which anti-Israeli terrorism is not only a means but a facet of its theory, because it is also interested in physically eliminating Israel.

The PLO's chief goal is the establishment of a Palestinian state. All of us here in Israel know that the establishment of a Palestinian state would constitute a threat to Israel's existence. For the PLO, a Palestinian state is the minimum. Therefore, anyone who engages in negotiations with it in effect accepts this principle. What else can one talk about with the PLO, if not about a Palestinian state?

[Ben-'Ami] Maybe the United States will discuss with the PLO what we have been trying to end, namely terrorism? Perhaps this is the way to bring about the end to terrorism: talk to the terrorists about ending their activity.

[Shamir] This is what they say. This is what the U.S. representatives have been saying, namely that they will discuss terrorism with the PLO. I believe that if indeed this happens and they discuss terrorism and test this pledge by the PLO leader, they will soon find out that they were wrong and have made a grave mistake. They will then be forced to rescind their decision.

The problem is that a big country, or even a small one, finds it extremely difficult to admit mistakes. The United States erred many times, even in the Middle East. And yet it is still the greatest superpower in the world. It can afford to make mistakes. We have known for a long time that we, however, cannot make even one mistake.

[Ben-'Ami] If so, sir, perhaps you can describe Israel's reaction: Will we launch some kind of political initiative? Will we, as was suggested in the past few days, try to find an elected representation of Palestinians in the territories? What about elections in the territories?

[Shamir] Political initiatives should not come in reaction to some move taken by others. We should take political initiatives to strengthen our position and to get closer to making peace. We will do that.

[Ben-'Ami] How? What exactly will be our first act or political move?

[Shamir] At this point I do not want to enumerate the things we will do in this sphere. Nevertheless, I have already said that after we present the new Cabinet to the Knesset, one of its first actions will be to come out with political plans and initiatives that will be publicized in Israel and all over the world.

[Ben-'Ami] Will that act or move in any way have any influence on the need for a broad-based government and the necessity to find a broader consensus?

[Shamir] Undoubtedly. I have always said that Israel's predicament requires the establishment of a broad-based government. Last week's events have served to stress this need. I believe we should all be more alert and prepared for the establishment of a broad-based government. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you that I have encountered such responsiveness from all sides.

[Ben-'Ami] Do you still believe that by the end of the extension period granted by the president you will be able to present a Cabinet, whether broad or narrow?

[Shamir] I sincerely hope to set up a government.

[Ben-'Ami] Can you tell us what size it will be?

[Shamir] At this point I cannot tell you how broad it will be. Nonetheless, it is highly significant—indeed, imperative—that a Cabinet be formed in the nearest possible future. I am therefore doing everything in my power to do so.

[Ben-'Ami] Thank you very much, sir.

Protesting Settlers March Toward U.S. Consulate

TA1712210388 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] At this hour demonstrators are about to march toward the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem as the demonstration they staged in the center of the city ends. They express support for the hunger strike held in front of the Prime Minister's office [by several settlers' leaders] and protest the U.S. decision to begin a dialogue with the PLO. Thousands are taking part in the demonstration. Among them are representatives of the settlers in Judaea and Samaria. Our correspondent Tamar Morag updates us from the demonstration site:

The organizers of the demonstration are tonight protesting the deterioration of the security situation in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. They say that the deterioration reached its climax in the Har Berakha murder. It is said here that not only has the actual terror reached a peak, but the political terror has as well. This finds expression in the U.S. recognition of the PLO, and the cracks in the stature of the Israeli leadership. The answer to the political and other forms of terror, it is said here, is settlement and supression of the uprising in the territories. Issuing the right instructions to the IDF, as well as additional steps, could end the uprising at once, say the heads of the settlers in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. They call on the prime minister to keep his promises to the right-wing parties on the settlements plan.

Cabinet Debates U.S. Move on PLO, Settlements

TA1812125388 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1153 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Report by political correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem—live]

[Text] Today's Cabinet session was almost entirely devoted to a discussion about Washington's decision to launch talks with the PLO. Many ministers spoke—with the exception of seven, according to my list—and expressed their opinion about the policy that should be adopted from now on. Two proposals to implement unilateral autonomy were raised. Incidentally, Minister Arens said that contrary to what has been reported, he does not intend to raise the notion of unilateral autonomy in the new government, since he does not believe this notion is a step in the right direction.

Defense Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres voiced their opposition to the idea of unilateral autonomy raised by Ministers Ya'aqobi and Shahal. Peres reiterated his argument that what should be done now is to hold elections in the territories so as to put together some sort of representation of the population with whom we could talk.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said we should rally around the opposition to a Palestinian state. The intifada [uprising] is terror, the prime minister said, and the PLO has not changed; it does not recognize the intifada as being terror. The entire world actually wants us to withdraw from Judaea and Samaria. The conflict is apparently afflicted by fatigue. What is more, the prime minister feels that the world at large puts a stronger emphasis on Israel's withdrawal than on the need for peace. The struggle against the Palestinian state should unite us, Mr Shamir said. There are differences of opinion concerning settlement, but settlements are part of the struggle in this country.

Shamir cited the differences concerning settlement following an argument between Peres and Minister Yosef Shapira of the National Religious Party. Peres said the answer must be settlement, but settlement in Galilee and in the Golan Heights. Shapira retorted: What are you talking about? Even on the question of settlement in the Golan Heights and Galilee, you did nothing during the government's term in office.

At the end of the meeting we heard Minister Rabin's remarks. Here is a brief excerpt:

[Begin recording] [Ben-'Ami] Minister Rabin, is the notion of unilateral autonomy which was raised by some ministers at the Cabinet session feasible?

[Rabin] I have not budged from my fundamental position that Israel must object to the establishment of a Palestinian state between Israel and Jordan which would be of a PLO nature. Therefore, I do not support negotiations with the PLO. [end recording]

These were Minister Rabin's remarks at the end of a debate which did not result in any resolutions—not that any resolutions were demanded.

U.S. Holding Parallel 'Secret' Talks with PLO

TA1912091788 Tel Aviv THE NATION in English 19 Dec 88 p 1

["Exclusive" Depth News Service report by Giyora Shamis]

[Text] Jerusalem—In secret negotiations conducted in parallel with the official US-PLO talks in Tunis, the US has demanded that the PLO cooperate with American intelligence and report on all Palestinian organizations, as well as on various terrorist organizations which have worked with the PLO in the past—including the Irish Republican Army, the Red Brigades, the Armenian Secret Liberation Army, the Hizballah in Lebanon and the Abu Nidal group.

The demands were made by a special American diplomatic team in Tunis. The official US-PLO negotiations in Tunis are being conducted by US envoy Robert Pelletreau. The sources in Washington, Jerusalem, and Tunis refused to identify the secret US negotiators.

The parallel talks are where "the real hard-bargaining is going on, while the other talks are for public consumption only," THE NATION was told. In other demands the US is pressing for:

—information from the PLO about Western hostages in Lebanon, especially about US Marine Lt Col William Higgins, who was abducted in February. Reports from Lebanon over the weekend said that Higgins had been sentenced to death by Hizballah.

—intelligence about guerrilla forces in Latin America with which the PLO has cooperated.

—Yasir 'Arafat to declare unilaterally that the PLO will cease trying to infiltrate Israel from Lebanon.

—resumption of US-PLO cooperation in areas of mutual interest, which existed before the 1982 Lebanon war.

—the PLO to publish a declaration disavowing violent attacks in the territories, especially the throwing of petrol bombs.

PLO representatives in the parallel talks reportedly told their US counterparts they would respond to the American demands after consulting directly with 'Arafat.

It is assumed that the next round of secret talks will be held at the same time as the cover talks conducted by Pelletreau are resumed.

[In a report on the 18 December Cabinet session by Louis Rapoport on page one, Tel Aviv THE NATION in English on 19 December adds that "the Cabinet was briefed by security personnel about the American-PLO talks. The Americans reportedly had demanded that the PLO cease all terrorist activities, and that 'Arafat's Fatah elite unit, Force-17, be disbanded because it is considered his main terrorist apparatus."]

Peres Letter to Shultz: U.S. Decision 'Premature'
TA1912095688 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 19 Dec 88 p 1

[Text] Foreign Minister Peres yesterday replied to U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, who sent identical letters to him and to Prime Minister Shamir, explaining the U.S. decision to start a dialogue with the PLO.

In his letter, Peres wrote:

While I remain convinced that the American decision was—at best—premature, I was reassured by the content of your letter as well as by some additional information provided by Ambassador Pickering.

Specifically, I took note of your emphasis on the challenge to the PLO to close the gap between the expressed commitment to abandon terrorism and the reality of its actions—in Israel, in the territories and elsewhere; your continued adherence to the long-standing American policy of not supporting the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and the clarification that opening a dialogue in and of itself does not constitute an American recognition of the PLO as a negotiating partner. [punctuation as published]

I fully agree with you that the lack of unanimity between us in the appreciation of the extent to which the PLO has already undergone a transformation must not affect the solid relationships between our two countries. Our complete trust in President Reagan and your own friendship served to reinforce the bond between our two countries. I am fully confident that this will be the case in future years as well.

Rabin Interviewed on U.S. 'Mistake,' Unrest
TA1612194188 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1815 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Interview with Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin by political correspondent Yig'al Goren—live]

[Text] [Goren] Shalom, good evening, and a good Sabbath to you, Mr Defense Minister. First I would like to ask you how, after a year of unrest in the territories and with the experience gained during that period, incidents like the one that took place in Nabulus today still occur, leaving so many dead and wounded?

[Rabin] It was clear to us that a large part of the population would regard last week's events as a victory, and would try to eliminate mass participation in violent incidents. By the same token, it was also clear to us that extremist elements opposing the moves as they were manifested in last week's events will try to heat up the area. We were consequently prepared for flare-ups, and one did take place but was quelled firmly. I endorse every step that was taken in order to achieve that end. The steps taken were in order, and necessary to make it plain to those elements that want to resume the disturbances that the IDF will not let them do that.

[Goren] Do you expect this process to continue following the latest political developments?

[Rabin] I sincerely hope that as a result of, on the one hand, what it regards as an achievement, and on the other, the suffering it has gone through, the public at large will be inclined to effect a calm. At the same time, we realize that all the elements that oppose any sort of progress toward a political process will come out against it, including through terrorist means.

[Goren] Mr Rabin, you were prime minister in 1975 when Israel signed the memorandum of understanding with the United States. Now, 13 years later, the United States officially informed us that it is launching a dialogue with the PLO, which was actually started today. Do you believe the United States is making a mistake?

[Rabin] There is no doubt in my mind that the U.S. decision is mistaken and grave both insofar as terrorism is concerned, and in terms of the chances for open political negotiations that are not predetermined by a U.S.-PLO dialogue which practically constitutes an a priori recognition of a Palestinian-PLO state between Israel and Jordan. I believe Israel should handle the matter on three levels: in information, in a political way vis-a-vis the United States, and on a positive level by initiating constructive proposals even if they do not stand a chance of being accepted in the foreseeable future.

[Goren] I believe that so far Israel has at least tried to raise constructive suggestions, but in light of the latest development, it looks as though no Palestinian who is not a PLO member would ever entertain the thought of talking to Israel. Does that not actually put us in a dead-end situation?

[Rabin] Let us first go back to the American issue. I had the opportunity yesterday to meet with official U.S. representatives. I told them: Gentlemen, you have abandoned a substantial and meaningful principle in overall U.S. policy, not only in Middle East policy—the opposition to, and the fight against terrorism. 'Arafat uttered some unclear words. You never even demanded that he issue a call in Arabic to all the Palestinians to cease terrorism from Lebanon and in the territories. In fact, he short-changed you. You fell for it and deviated from this fundamental position. This has international ramifications.

Our primary demand from the United States should therefore be: Gentlemen, put 'Arafat to the test! Ask him to come out, in his own voice and in Arabic, and tell all the Palestinians to stop terrorism. We should also tell the Americans: You have, in fact, legitimized the uprising in the territories. What is the uprising in the territories? The hurling of a firebomb at a bus transporting civilians, the killing of a mother and her three children. Is that not terrorism? After all, in the news conference on the basis of which the United States accepted him, 'Arafat said that the uprising would continue as no one could end it. Is that not terrorism?

I believe the Americans made a serious mistake here, but it can still be corrected insofar as terrorism is concerned by way of exchanges of ideas and an information campaign.

Second, with regard to the dialogue with the PLO, in Middle East terms it actually means an a priori acceptance of a Palestinian state. In the explanatory note appended to the Shultz initiative in 1982 [as heard], the Americans themselves said that acceptance of the notion of self-determination for the Palestinians in effect means acceptance of a Palestinian state. We should grill [lemasmer] them on this.

[Goren] Mr Defense Minister, in conclusion, can we hear from you an operational suggestion as to what Israel can do in practice—beyond the information campaign it can launch? Can Israel continue to adhere to the prevailing line?

[Rabin] With regard to the Americans, Israel must talk to them and demand the things I mentioned earlier.

[Goren] I am asking about Israel. If the prime minister approaches you and tells you that Israel has reached a no-choice situation and must talk to the PLO; if he asks you whether Israel faces a real threat to its existence by deciding to engage in such a dialogue, what will you tell him?

[Rabin] I will tell him that I object to talks with the PLO because I object to the establishment of a Palestinian-PLO state between Israel and Jordan. The establishment of such a state entails a serious threat to Israel. It must therefore not occur. Besides, undoubtedly the prime minister will never raise such a suggestion.

[Goren] Does that mean that the Jordanian option is defunct?

[Rabin] At this stage, I believe we are a long way from a political process. We must present an alternative involving a dialogue with an elected representation of the Palestinian residents of the territories. Even if this does not materialize, I believe that by presenting it as the representation elected from and by the general population—and by promoting an information campaign on this—it will be possible to drive home into the U.S. public awareness that we have a real proposal. The PLO is not an elected body.

[Goren] Thank you very much, Mr Defense Minister.

Jerusalem Arabic Views U.S. Move on Dialogue

JN1512160188 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 1440 GMT 15 Dec 88

["Observation" by 'Ezra Shirazi]

[Text] Dear listeners, the U.S. Administration announced at dawn today its decision to hold a dialogue with the PLO after the latter met the three well known U.S. conditions; namely, an official PLO undertaking to renounce all types of terrorism, a recognition of Israel's right to exist, and a recognition of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

PLO Spokesman Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahman described this U.S. decision as a historic turning point. This description might be considered justified from the perspective of the PLO and its leaders, as this development or turning point came after the PLO had continued throughout the past years to knock on all Arab and international doors to open channels of communication and dialogue with the U.S. Administration. However, the PLO continued to maneuver, procrastinate, and prevaricate, demonstrating an evasion regarding meeting the U.S. conditions set by Washington in 1975.

If the 'Arafat organization views the U.S. decision as a historic turning point, the major and more important question is whether this decision will eventually be a negative or positive turning point regarding efforts to resolve the Palestine question and bring about a comprehensive Middle East peace. Eventually, this is the substantial and more important issue.

The substantial issue has never lain, in the past or at present, in whether the United States will hold a dialogue with Yasir 'Arafat and his supporters. The essential issue has never been and is not today the initiation of dialogue or the establishment of peace between the U.S. Administration and the 'Arafat organization. The substantial issue has always been and still is to find a realistic, honorable solution to the Palestine question and achieve a comprehensive peace in our region.

In any event, discretion and sobriety dictate that we do not get ahead of events and jump to conclusions. However, what is certain right now is that the U.S. decision is a touchstone for the 'Arafat organization. It will be clear sooner or later whether or not this organization has really changed its color, skin, traits, and innate character.

Jerusalem Arabic: Libyan Protestors Shot by PLO

JN1712151788 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 1430 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] A spokesman for the group of [Fatah Provisional Command leader] Abu Musa [Sa'id Musa Muraghah] said in Damascus today that personnel inside the PLO mission's building in Tripoli, Libya opened fire on Libyan and Palestinian demonstrators protesting Yasir 'Arafat's recent statements in Geneva. Several demonstrators were wounded. The spokesman expressed the denunciation by the Abu Musa organization, which is a dissident Fatah group, of the pro-'Arafat personnel opening of fire on demonstrators.

It is noteworthy that Tripoli radio the day before yesterday said demonstrations were staged in several Libyan cities to protest 'Arafat's statements. However, the radio did not mention any shooting incident.

American Arab Leader Detained at Airport

TA1712052788 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] 'Abdini Jabarra, the president of the American Arab Antidiscrimination Committee, is being held in police custody after being detained yesterday at Ben-Gurion Airport as he arrived in Israel. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Jabarra has been ordered to leave the country on a return flight to New York today.

U.S. Embassy officials said Israel informed them in advance that Jabarra would be denied entry. The Foreign Ministry said he has a long record of anti-Israeli activities, and had been involved in attempts to deny Prime Minister Shamir entry into the United States and in initiating lawsuits to prevent American Jewish fund-raising groups from collecting money for Israel.

Amal Frees UNIFIL Men, Captures 22 Shi'ites

TA1712091988 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0900 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] In southern Lebanon, members of the Shi'ite Amal militia have rescued three Irish UNIFIL troops who were kidnapped yesterday by Iran-supported Shi'ites. The Amal men also captured 22 Shi'ites who are members of the organization that kidnapped the Irish soldiers.

The three soldiers had been held captive in a house in the village of Al-Sultaniyah near Tibnin, north of the security strip.

IDF Questioning Suspected Lebanese 'Terrorists'

TA1612183488 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The IDF is questioning four suspected terrorists captured in south Lebanon yesterday. According to the IDF spokesman, one of the men, Jawad Qasafi, is a senior officer in the Believers Opposition Front headed by Mustafa Durani, which has been responsible for a series of attacks against Israeli and South Lebanese Army soldiers. Durani broke away from the Shi'ite Amal Organization to set up his own group, which has links with the extremist Hizballal. Shi'ites.

According to the IDF spokesman, Qasafi is believed to be linked to the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers in south Lebanon in February 1986.

The men were arrested by Israeli soldiers in an action near the village of Tibnin outside the security zone. The incident led to demonstrations by villagers in the area who took four UNIFIL soldiers captive in protest, but later released them. The IDF says it will release any of the four south Lebanese now being questioned if they are found to have no connection to terrorist activity.

2 of 4 Shi'ites Released

TA1712111288 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] This afternoon the IDF released two of the four Shi'ites who were captured last week in the village of Tibnin north of the security zone. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the two crossed the security zone escorted by South Lebanese Army soldiers. When they passed through Shefar'am [as heard], they were applauded.

A security source in southern Lebanon has said that the questioning of the two has been completed; once it became clear that they were not directly involved in terrorist acts, they were released.

2 Lebanese 'Gunmen' Killed in Security Zone

TA1612190088 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Two gunmen were killed by South Lebanese Army forces in southern Lebanon today when they were spotted on their way to carry out an attack in the security zone. Our reporter says explosive charges and Katyusha rockets were found on the bodies of the gunmen.

Missiles Fired at Christian Radio in Lebanon

TA1812094788 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0900 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Two missiles were fired this morning at the transmitting facilities of the Voice of Hope radio station in South Lebanon. Apparently the missiles were Katyusha rockets that were fired from a spot north of the security zone. No casualties were reported.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the station's transmitting antennas were hit, but it remains unclear whether other facilities were also damaged. Our correspondent reports that the station itself is situated elsewhere, in the village of Al-Khiyam.

2 SLA Soldiers Killed by Mine Near Border

TA1812113888 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Two South Lebanese Army soldiers have been killed near the Israeli border. Reporter Alan Ben-'Ami says the soldiers were dismantling mines near the Voice of Hope radio station when one of the mines exploded. The station is located close to the Israeli border town of Metulla. There were no Israelis in the area at the time.

Weekend Disturbances Reported in Territories

4 Killed, 20 Injured 16 Dec

TA1612183988 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 16 Dec 88

[text] Four youths were killed and more than 20 people were injured during clashes between soldiers and demonstrators in the territories today. Four youths were killed in Nabulus when the army opened fire as disturbances broke out during a funeral procession. Arab sources say 12 people were injured. Nabulus remains under curfew.

Military sources say disturbances were planned, and erupted simultaneously in different parts of the city. Arab sources say six people were injured in villages in the Tulkarm area, and two residents of the Gaza Strip were injured in clashes.

In East Jerusalem, a border police jeep and a police vehicle were damaged by stones thrown at them on the Ofel road outside the Temple Mount. Police dispersed stone throwers with tear gas.

Nabulus Youth Dies of Injuries

TA1712082688 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Muhammad al-Qawimi, a 20-year-old Nabulus youth, died today in the hospital from injuries he suffered during demonstrations in town yesterday. This brings the number of casualties from yesterday's incidents up to five. The curfew on the town continues.

In Tulkarm a commercial strike was declared as a sign of mourning over the casualties in the incidents.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 17 December adds: "In East Jerusalem the police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse youths who congregated and threw rocks at them. Our correspondent Moshe Nussbaum reports that schoolboys threw rocks at policemen near police national headquarters. Ten boys were detained."]

Tourist Among Wounded 17 Dec

TA1712212788 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] On Friday, a 9-month-old baby, the daughter of the Asaf family from the settlement of Dolev in Samaria, was wounded by a stone. She is currently hospitalized in Hadassah 'En-Kerem. The car the family was traveling in was hit by stones on the way to Jerusalem. The baby was hit in the head. She is bleeding in the brain area, and is wounded in one eye. She is hospitalized in intensive care and her situation is reported as stable.

In two incidents in Samaria, two men were hit in the face and wounded by stones thrown at them. One is a resident of Ginnot Shomron, and the other is a tourist from Switzerland. Our correspondents Yafa Glick and Moti Amir report that the Swiss tourist, an employee of the Digital computer company, was hurt on the way to Oranit. The Ginnot Shomron resident lost control of his car as a result of being stoned and crashed into a pillar near Qalqilyah. Both injured men were transferred to Beilinson Hospital, and it has been reported that they are both conscious.

The territories today witnessed a stormy day; the first day of a 3-day strike announced by the Unified National Command of the Uprising in protest of the severe incidents in Nabulus yesterday. Six Arab residents were wounded in the Gaza Strip, and six more in Judaea and Samaria. All suffer from gunshot wounds. Arab sources report more than 20 wounded today.

'Severe Disturbances' in Gaza

TA1812083288 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0505 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] An IDF soldier and eight Gaza Strip residents were injured during disturbances over the weekend. Our correspondent David Regev reports:

A wave of disturbances swept the Gaza Strip over the weekend during which 13 residents were injured, Arab sources claim. The IDF spokesman admits to only eight injured.

The riots broke out on Friday at noon in the Al-Nusayrat and Khan Yunus refugee camps after the death of five Nabulus residents by IDF gunfire was reported. The news spread quickly, and over the weekend rioting took place in most Gaza Strip refugee camps.

Arab sources report that during the disturbances, two residents of the Jabalyah refugee camp were seriously injured and were taken to Al-Shifa' Hospital in Gaza. The same sources added that two sisters, aged 4 and 7 who live in the camp, were slightly hurt by rubber bullets.

On Saturday, an IDF patrol driving down Gaza's main street was attacked by locals who hurled stones at the troops. One of the soldiers was slightly injured and taken to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba. The IDF spokesman confirmed the soldier's injury, but claimed that relative quiet prevailed in the Gaza Strip over the weekend.

Curfews were imposed on the Dayr al-Balah refugee camp and the Al-Shabura suburb of Rafah, and a partial commercial strike was held throughout the Gaza Strip in a show of solidarity for the deaths in Nabulus.

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 18 December in a report by Eytan Rabin on page one adds: "Severe disturbances took place over the weekend in all Gaza Strip cities. According to Arab sources, 12 residents were injured by IDF gunfire and 15 were hurt by beatings and gas inhalation. Among the injured were two women, both 41 years old."]

Schools Reopen; Strike Observed

TA1812104188 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Studies resumed this morning in all high schools in the territories with the exception of Nabulus, which remains under a curfew imposed 2 days ago. In Judaea and Samaria a general strike is being observed today as well, to protest the incidents that occurred in Nabulus over the weekend.

2 Killed; IDF Investigating

TA1812113288 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Two people were killed in the territories today. A 24-year-old resident of Dayr al-Ghusun in the Tulkarm District was shot and killed by an IDF soldier after he tried to heave a large brick at the soldier from a rooftop. The incident occurred during IDF operations in the village. The IDF is continuing its activities in the area.

Our correspondent Moti Amir notes that Arab sources report on an additional fatality in Rafah, but the circumstances of his death are still unclear. The IDF is investigating.

Curfews on W. Bank, Gaza Camps

TA1812132588 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Security forces this afternoon imposed a curfew on Qalqilyah. A large number of Israeli vehicles had earlier been hit by stones, and a bus windshield was smashed. Curfews remain in effect in Nabulus and the nearby refugee camps of 'Askar and Balatah.

Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that this morning security forces imposed curfews on the Al-Shati' and Al-Nusayrat refugee camps, and later today curfews were imposed on the Dayr al-Balah and Shabura refugee camps in Rafah.

AFP Says 3 Killed 18 Dec

NC1812153688 Paris AFP in English 1520 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Jerusalem, Dec 18 (AFP)—Israeli troops on Sunday shot dead three Palestinians and wounded 35, Palestinian sources said, as one of the bloodiest weekends in the occupied territories in more than a year was drawing to a close.

Nine Palestinians have been killed by Israeli soldiers since Friday and 54 wounded as troops have battled throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip to put down an uprising against Israeli military rule.

Israeli gunfire, by unofficial count, has taken the lives of 313 Palestinians since the protests erupted December 9, 1987.

The Palestinians, Mustafa Muhammad Farhat, 30, and Zuhayr Fayyad, 22, were killed in disturbances at the Rafah refugee camp on the Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian sources, who added that two other protestors were taken to hospital in critical condition.

Elsewhere on the Gaza Strip, two Palestinians—including a 12-year-old boy—were seriously wounded in the Maghazi refugee camp. Israeli troops also reportedly shot and wounded six other Palestinians in the Burayj and Dayr al-Balah camps.

On the West Bank Ibrahim Muhammad Badran, 24, died in hospital after being hit in the chest during a clash with troops in the village of Dayr al-Shusun. In other confrontations reported on the West Bank, 10 Palestinians were wounded in Qalqyliah and two in Nabulus.

Troops overnight shot 12 Palestinians on the Gaza Strip and one in Qalqyliah on the West Bank, Palestinian sources said earlier Sunday.

The current spurt in violence began Friday when troops shot dead five Palestinian protestors in and around the West Bank town of Nabulus during the funeral of a 15-year-old demonstrator. A sixth Palestinian died of his wounds on Saturday, when troops wounded at least 20 demonstrators in the territories, according to Palestinian sources.

More on 17, 18 Dec Incidents

TA1812155788 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1500 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Three Arabs were killed this morning in the territories. [passage omitted] In the Shabura refugee camp in Rafah, two people were killed and three were wounded during riots. The IDF spokesman's office reports that they know one man was killed and no one wounded in the Shabura refugee camp. Our correspondent Moti Amir adds, quoting Arab sources, that the other person killed in Shabura was Muhammad Farhat, aged 35. [passage omitted]

The heads of settlement councils in Judaea and Samaria are meeting in Ginnot Shomron at this hour to hold an emergency discussion following the wounding of three settlement residents last night. It became apparent that in addition to Alexander Burger, who was wounded last night by a stone thrown at his car in Qalqilyah and hospitalized with a skull fracture, his wife and son were also wounded. His wife, Rina, has five broken ribs and is hospitalized in intensive care. The 5-year-old son's leg was broken in the incident.

Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that the settler leaders are discussing, among other things, proposals to close down the settlements in Samaria, and to hold a demonstration in Jerusalem protest the security situation. The Ginnot Shomron secretary reports that a resident of Qedumim was wounded this morning by a stone in 'Anabta. Near the village of Biddu, north of Jerusalem, two cars were stoned and their windshields were smashed. The drivers were not hurt.

Gaza Incidents Investigated

TA1912104188 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] An initial investigation of yesterday's incidents in Gaza indicates that the IDF unit followed regulations. Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that in the first incident, in which a 23-year-old youth was killed, the unit was attacked with bricks and bottles by approximately 100 locals in the Shabura neighborhood of Gaza. The unit commander issued the order to open fire at the stone throwers, and the youth was killed. In the second incident, in which a 30-year-old man was killed, the unit encountered a group of agitators. The unit commander ordered the troops to shoot at the leader, and the man was killed. The commander of the southern district of Gaza has told our correspondent that the disturbances in region have worsened over the past 48 hours, evidently due to the developments in Geneva.

Badr Sa'id Qardahi, a Nabulus resident who was injured 4 days ago during incidents in the town, has died of his wounds in an East Jerusalem hospital. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that he is the sixth victim of last weekend's riots in Nabulus.

The general strike in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza is continuing for the 3d consecutive day to protest the incidents in Nabulus.

3 Dead, 'More Than 30' Wounded

TA1912101488 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 19 Dec 88 pp 1, 10

[Report by Joshua Brilliant and Joel Greenberg]

[Excerpts] Three Palestinians were reported dead and more than 30 wounded in a fresh wave of clashes between rioters and IDF soldiers in the administered territories yesterday.

In the Gaza Strip, two Palestinian rioters were killed and 19 wounded in street battles that raged throughout the Gaza Strip.

The IDF spokesman confirmed the two deaths, accepting responsibility for one and saying the IDF was checking the circumstances of the other. He also said that one person was seriously injured and transferred to the Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer, but a hospital source said at least two Gazans were brought there yesterday. [passage omitted]

A curfew was imposed on Qalqilyah following heavy clashes between soldiers and rioters who set up roadblocks, burned tyres and hurled rocks at soldiers and Israeli cars. About a dozen rioters were reportedly wounded.

A youth was shot in the head and seriously wounded at Salim near Nabulus, and taken to Al-Maqasid Hospital in East Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

[In a report on page one by Dani Rubinstein and Dani Tzidqoni, Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on 19 December notes that "residents of Dayr al-Hatab and Salim on the Nabulus-Elon More road complained that settlers carried out acts of retaliation in their villages, severely wounding a youngster," and that "two other people were wounded in Dhib in the Nabulus District. Clashes were also reported in Battir in the Bethlehem District. In Tulkarm, Army troops entered two high schools and dispersed the students with tear gas."]

Amman Radio on Cabinet Reshuffle, Appointments
JN1912165088 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] A royal decree has been issued appointing His Excellency Staff Field Marshal Al-Sharif Zayd ibn Shakir as chief of the Royal Hashemite Court and adviser to his majesty the supreme commander for the affairs of the Arab Army—the Jordanian Armed Forces—as of 19 December 1988.

A royal decree has been issued appointing His Excellency 'Adnan Abu 'Awdah as political adviser to his majesty the king and canceling the post of the minister of the Royal Hashemite Court as of 19 December 1988.

A royal decree has been issued appointing 'Amir Khammash special adviser to his majesty the king as of 19 December 1988.

A royal decree has been issued accepting the resignation of His Excellency Dr Sami Jawdah, minister of state for parliamentary affairs; His Excellency Tahir al-Masri, minister of foreign affairs; and His Excellency Dr Zayd Hamzah, minister of health, as of 19 December 1988.

The following royal decree has also been issued effecting cabinet changes:

We, Husayn I, king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Taking cognizance of Article 35 of the Constitution and in accordance with the prime minister's recommendation, decree the following:

1. His Excellency Marwan al-Qasim will be appointed deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

2. His Excellency Marwan al-Humud will be appointed minister of municipal and rural affairs and environment.

3. His Excellency Dr Zuhayr Malhas will be appointed minister of health.

4. His Excellency 'Abd al-Salam Kan'an will be appointed minister of state for cabinet affairs.

5. His Excellency Yusuf Hamdan [al-Jabr] will be appointed minister of agriculture.

6. His Excellency Zuhayr al-'Ajluni will be appointed minister of state for cabinet affairs.

7. His Excellency Dr Fayiz al-Tarawinah will be appointed minister of supply.

8. His Excellency Yanal Hikmat will be appointed minister of tourism.

Issued at the Basman Royal Palace on 9 Jumadah al-'Ula, 1409 of the hegira; corresponding to 19 December 1988.

The new ministers were sworn in before His Majesty King Husayn in the presence of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the prime minister, the chief of the Royal Hashemite Court, his majesty's political adviser, and his majesty's special adviser.

CBS' Rather Interviews King on U.S., PLO
JN1612212788 Amman Television Service in English 2000 GMT 16 Dec

[Interview with King Husayn on "the evening news show of the American television network CBS" by Dan Rather; date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Rather] Your Majesty, thank you for being with us. I know you've had a very long day and evening. The Israelis are angry. The Palestinians seem to be jubilant. What is your reaction to this turn of events?

[Husayn] I am extremely happy, sir, and extremely encouraged and hopeful that this is a turning point towards resolving the most volatile problem threatening regional peace in this area and certainly world peace.

[Rather] You said that you are encouraged. Why should anybody be genuinely encouraged about this?

[Husayn] Because I believe that for a very long period of time, there was a question as to what is the Palestinian position, what is the Arab position. Does the Arab position give total support to the Palestinians and their sole legitimate representative, the Palestinian Liberation Organization? And following the PNC resolutions, the Palestinian voice has been heard very very clearly answering all the requests and demands of the world community and the United States in Geneva.

[Rather] Your Majesty, you know our country and its people well. You know there are an awful lot people in this country who care about the Middle East but who do not follow it detail by minute detail. In your opinion, what is the single most important thing for Americans to understand about what has happened in the last 24 to 48 hours?

[Husayn] I believe that they should understand that the Palestinians and their representatives have opted for peace and showed their readiness to contribute their utmost for the attainment of a permanent, lasting peace in this area based on justice. And this in itself is a good, very good development that has been sought for a long period of time.

[Rather] You've just returned from meetings with Egypt's President Husni Mubarak. What did you talk about?

[Husayn] We spoke about these developments and our other concerns in terms of the area and our bilateral relations. And we both were of the view that this is a

historic moment, and we are both hopeful that the future will see the translation of the will of the world, so to speak, to ease tensions wherever they exist, to resolve problems, to create greater stability, and a better future for generations to come. We hope that this will be translated effectively in actions in this part of the world in the very short period ahead.

[Rather] And what was Mubarak's role in all this, Your Majesty?

[Husayn] We have worked very very closely together, sir, and our views had been one and the same. And if we have contributed towards this turn of event, it was out of our realization that the Palestinians were attached to their identity and their cause and in the same way as they sought union with Jordan in the early fifties, they sought to speak for themselves in the recent past. That is where we disengaged a little earlier on and yet our relations with them are extremely close now, probably better than they have ever been without the suspicions and doubts of the past. And now they are in a position of responsibility. Certainly, the PLO, the PNC is, and they are exercising their responsibilities in the best possible way in a very constructive way and one that gives us all hope.

[Rather] Your Majesty, I heard a report. Is it true or not true that when the agreement to resume a dialogue was hanging in the balance, that it was Mubarak and possibly yourself who, in contact with Yasir 'Arafat, said: You have to repeat it, you have to come back even after your speech in Geneva on Monday and say it more forcefully and more directly in order to get the deal, and that he did that. Is that a true story?

[Husayn] As far as I am concerned, I called him immediately after his initial statement at the United Nations and congratulated him because he did to my way of thinking and understanding of the speech, which I followed personally, answer all the demands that were ever made of the PLO in a very clear way.

President Mubarak on his side was in touch with him, but then, obviously, there was some suggestion that there was ambiguity, although I could not find it at all, and I believe it was Chairman 'Arafat who decided to elaborate, and we were very happy with the results.

[Rather] So to speak, that he agreed: Well, I don't see why it is necessary, I don't think it is necessary, but I'll go the extra mile.

[Husayn] No, I just congratulated him and wished him well. But, then obviously things became a little complicated. And I believe that he had it all in the first place then, but nonetheless there were some questions in the minds of some, and I believe he was successfull in answering these questions.

[Rather] Your Majesty, does this change in the U.S. position change the perception of America in the Arab world?

[Husayn] It is a very welcome development. Well, I've been involved for the last 3 years in trying to work out the details to enable such a dialogue to begin. And that's why I am aware of what was asked of the PLO or expected of the PLO and why I am saying and have been saying that the PLO did meet everything that was asked of it very adequately. So the beginning is a dialogue obviously and is a very very important development. And we are ....

[Rather, interrupting] Secretary Shultz and President Reagan, particularly President Reagan, placed heavy emphasis on Yasir 'Arafat renouncing terrorism. Question: Can 'Arafat deliver on that promise. It's one thing to say we renounce terrorism. It's another to keep terrorist acts from happening. Can he deliver on that?

[Husayn] I believe neither the Israelis, nor the Palestinians, nor anyone in this world can absolutely guarantee that no extremist from whichever side might try to damage what has been achieved or destroy the chances for progress towards peace. But I know 'Arafat to be a man who is determined to stand by his word to the best of his ability. And that's good enough for me.

[Rather] I want to make sure that I understand, so our viewers understand. You think he will do his best.

[Husayn] I know he will do...

[Rather, interrupting] Not just in words but also in deeds.

[Husayn] I know he will do his best, yes.

[Rather] What are the risks to Yasir 'Arafat? Can he stay alive now that he has made this move?

[Husayn] Only God knows. But I believe that he has put his credibility, his struggle in terms of his entire life up to now... [changes thought] Yes, certainly taken a stand which I believe reflects the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people, certainly the overwhelming majority of them. He has acted with courage and wisdom, and I hope that the results will be successful in accomplishing his dream and that of all of us of seeing a just and lasting peace in the interest and for the benefit of all the peoples of this area.

[Rather] And what about the dangers to President Mubarak? Is he in some danger now—increased danger ...

[Husayn, interrupting] I don't see why ...

[Rather] ... for having helped make this happen?

[Husayn] I don't think that is the case. And President Mubarak grows and has grown in stature in this entire Arab world ever since he first assumed responsibilities. He is one of the greatest patriots in our entire Arab world.

[Rather] Do other Arab states—Saudi Arabia, Jordan—benefit from this changed U.S. position?

[Husayn] Certainly. As far as I am concerned, I am the first to say that I welcome this development. I've worked for it for a long period of time and I am sure that the rest feel the same. And incidently, all the Arab states have endorsed the resolutions of the PNC and therefore obviously would support what Chairman 'Arafat is doing to elaborate on the resolutions and to explain them in the way that he has done at the United Nations.

[Rather] Your Majesty, as you pointed out, you've been involved in this process for a very long time. Do you see a time frame for a possible settlement here?

[Husayn] I see the beginning. It will... [changes thought] We were already there. I see the Arab position defined in support of a Palestinian position that was lacking, maybe, for a period of time. But now they are responsible for their own cause, their own fate, their own future. And they've come up to everybody's expectations and more. So I hope that the world, which is, I believe, on the course to resolving problems everywhere where they threaten peace and stability, will welcome these developments and will help all concerned to move.

I hope that the international conference will become a reality before too long with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the people of Palestine. And I hope that Israel will somehow find its way towards changing its attitude in the interest of future Israeli generations and in the interest of peace in this entire area. I believe that we will begin to see progress sometime soon, maybe early spring somehow.

[Rather] Is it your opinion, Your Majesty, that this will force the Israelis to talk?

[Husayn] There is no option or alternative unless the Israelis seek to create the situation that will keep this area in turmoil, and the dangers ar obvious to all concerned then, including the world.

[Rather] The early reaction—it is only the early reaction from Israel—includes a number of people in Israel—government officials—saying this increases the prospects of violence—even war; it doesn't decrease it. Could you address yourself to them?

[Husayn] I really can't comprehend this logic because if you have a problem with another party—if you are in a position of seeking a solution to that problem—then you obviously should join that party that shows readiness to resolve the problem. And the Palestinian problem is a root cause of the Arab-Israeli problem, of the entire instability in this area. So if the Palestinians are there and are ready and willing to make their contribution the Israelis ought to. And I hope that they would realize that as soon as possible.

[Rather] Your Majesty, you've been very patient with us. Thank you very much.

[Husayn] Thank you very much indeed, sir. It's a pleasure.

Interior Minister Denies Arrest of 'Activists'

JN1812130488 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The Jordanian interior minister has denied the arrest of activists supporting the uprising in the occupied territories. He said: No one was arrested in Jordan because of his support for the uprising. If there were any arrests, they must have been aimed at subversive elements.

The Fatah Revolutionary Council of Abu Nidal [Sabri al-Banna] and the Damascus-based committee in defense of freedom in Jordan had earlier accused Jordan of arresting Jordanians and Palestinians supporting the uprising.

Prince Hasan Leaves on Visit to Switzerland

JN1412213388 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan today left Amman for Switzerland on a working visit that will last several days. His Highness Prince Faysal ibn al-Husayn took the constitutional oath before Prince Hasan and Cabinet members as regent for His Majesty King Husayn during his majesty's absence abroad.

Returns From Visit 16 Dec

JN1612193188 Amman Television Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Excerpt] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan returned to Amman last night after participating in the work of the fifth Islamic-Christian meeting held under the slogan "Justice and Peace." Held under his highness' patronage in the Swiss city of Champery, the meeting lasted 4 days. [passage omitted]

Release of U.S. Hostages Said 'Postponed'
JN1812093088 Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 17 Dec 88 p 7

[Text] Scholar Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah's sources have revealed that the release of the U.S. hostages in Lebanon is currently postponed due to certain extraordinary regional and international complications.

Fadlallah Suspends Mediation Over Waite Release
NC1712063988 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0628 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Hizballah spiritual leader Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has announced that he has frozen his mediation efforts for the release of Terry Waite, who has been held hostage in Lebanon for nearly 2 years. He added that his mediation has reached a deadlock and that he stopped his efforts after he had failed to achieve positive results.

UK Advises Nationals To Leave W. Beirut, South
NC1912175788 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1645 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Britain is fearful about the presence of its nationals in Lebanon's occupied territories. The British Embassy has issued a statement advising British nationals not to travel to Lebanon except for emergency reasons.

The statement emphasizes that travelers are not allowed to travel to West Beirut, including the Khaldah Airport, as well as to Al-Biqa' Valley, Tripoli in the north, Al-'Urqub, and the South, and notes that those already in these areas must leave as soon as possible. The statement says that the Larnaca-Juniyah route may be safer than the Khaldah Airport.

Further Reports on Release of Swiss National

Winkler Released 'Short Time Ago'
NC1612193588 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1929 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] We have a new report from the editorial desk. According to security sources, Peter Winkler, the Swiss national who had been held hostage in Lebanon, and who is the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, was released a short time ago.

'Security Sources' on Release
NC1612195588 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1945 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] A short while ago, security sources reported that Peter Winkler, envoy of the Red Cross Committee in Lebanon, had been released just before 2130 this evening.

Michel Pash, Swiss Foreign Ministry spokesman, had declared earlier that his country has been holding indirect contacts for several days with the supposed kidnappers of Peter Winkler, who had been kidnapped in Sidon 1 month ago. He said: We are passing through a sensitive phase in the contacts. Pash added that the Swiss foreign minister had asked the press to be careful about this issue.

Abu Nidal Group Frees Winkler
NC1612202288 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] According to security reports, Swiss hostage Peter Winkler was released in Sidon by Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council at 2055 today.

The sources explained that Winkler is now in the home of Mustafa Sa'd, leader of the Nasirite Popular Organization.

Nasirite 'Sources' Confirm Release
NC1612202888 Paris AFP in English 2025 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Sidon, Lebanon, Dec 16 (AFP)—Peter Winkler, a Swiss delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) abducted here on November 17, was released late Friday in Sidon and handed to the Popular Nasirite Organization, PNO sources said.

Mr Winkler was turned over to the PNO's military police at 0910 pm local time (1910 GMT), the sources said.

Earlier in Bern, a Swiss Foreign Ministry spokesman said Switzerland had made contact with Mr Winkler's abductors.

Winkler Handed to Swiss Officials
NC1612230488 Paris AFP in English 2254 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Sidon, Lebanon, Dec (AFP)—Peter Winkler, a Swiss delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) abducted here on November 17, was released late Friday in Sidon and handed over to the Popular Nasirite Organization, (PNO), and then to Swiss officials, a PNO member said.

Mr Winkler, 32, whose abduction was not claimed by any group, was taken back to the place where he was first kidnapped, in a southern sector of Sidon, and turned over to PNO forces, spokesman Usamah Sa'id said.

"Mr Winkler seemed rested and said he was well and had not been mistreated during his captivity," Mr Sa'id said, adding that he wore the same clothes as those on the day of his capture.

The released hostage was later driven to PNO headquarters and handed to a Swiss diplomat, Mr Sa'id said without specifying the location.

According to security sources in Sidon, the abductors had put Mr Winkler in the trunk of a car which they drove for half an hour, making several stops along the way, before finally releasing him.

"His release came in the wake of pressure from Mustafa Sa'd (the PNO leader)," the organization's spokesman said. He gave no details of who may have been pressured into releasing Mr Winkler.

On November 23, Mustafa Sa'd said he had information that could lead to Mr Winkler's captors and their identities.

In Geneva, an ICRC spokesman said the Red Cross was "very happy" with news of Mr Winkler's release, adding that there would be no further comment because of political implications.

The spokesman confirmed that Mr Winkler was "in very good health" and was headed for Beirut. [passage omitted]

Switzerland Says No Concessions

NC1712133688 Paris AFP in English 1315 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Beirut, Dec 17 (AFP)—Red Cross delegate Peter Winkler was preparing here Saturday for repatriation to Switzerland after his release from a month of captivity in Lebanon, according to Swiss Ambassador to Beirut Dino Sciolli.

In a separate development, three Irish soldiers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon were freed 24 hours after their adbuction in the southern Lebanon village of Tibnin, UNIFIL spokesman Timor Goksel said.

Mr. Winkler, a 32-year-old Swiss delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), was released Friday night in the south Lebanon port city of Sidon, where he had been abducted by gunmen on November 17.

Neither the Swiss Government for ICRC officials would identify Mr. Winkler's kidnappers, but Swiss Foreign Minister Rene Felber said that Sweden's ambassador to Damascus, Rolf Gauffin, mediated the release.

Mr. Felber, speaking in Bern, also said Switzerland had obtained Mr. Winkler's release without making any concessions to his kidnappers.

Mr. Winkler was kidnapped as Swiss authorities prepared for the January trial of Muhammad al-Hariri, a 22-year-old Lebanese Shi'ite charged with hijacking an Air Afrique airplane in July 1987 and killing a French passenger.

A letter in Mr. Winkler's handwriting reached an international news agency in Beirut two weeks ago saying that he had been seized because of his Swiss nationality and that his government knew what it had to do to obtain his release.

That was the only known communication during the month-long detention of Mr. Winkler, whose abduction was never publicly claimed.

An ICRC spokesman on Saturday merely confirmed this and said "we thank the Lebanese."

Mr. Gauffin took charge of Mr. Winkler upon his release in Sidon on Friday night and drove him to Beirut, 40 kilometers (25) miles north, according to ICRC officials in Lebanon.

Mr. Sciolli then picked up Mr. Winkler at the Summerland Hotel complex in Moslem West Beirut and took him into the Christian-majority eastern sector.

Regional security sources said the ex-hostage Saturday was at an ICRC center at 'Afr Hbab, a Christian village some 20 kilometers (12 miles) north of Beirut.

Mr. Sciolli said Mr. Winkler would return to Switzerland "as soon as possible," but that arrangements for his repatriation had not been completed.

The release would not have been possible without the mediation of Mr. Gauffin, Mr. Sciolli said.

Analysts in Beirut said Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasir 'Arafat—who made a trip to Stockholm on December 7—may also have been involved in the process. The Sidon area, where Mr. Winkler was kidnapped, is home to more than 100,000 Palestinians.

Sweden reportedly served as an intermediary in the negotiations that led the United States and the PLO to open a dialogue. The first official meeting between the two sides took place on Friday in Tunis, just hours before Mr. Winkler's release.

In addition, Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Edouard Brunner held a 45-minute meeting with Mr. 'Arafat on the matter of Mr. Winkler last Wednesday in Geneva.

The ICRC halted its operations in Sidon, where Mr. Winkler was based, during his captivity, and trimmed the number of its Swiss delegates in Lebanon from 30 to 17. [passage omitted]

Winkler En Route to Larnaca

NC1712202788 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Switzerland has admitted that Yasir 'Arafat and Sweden played roles in securing the release of Swiss national Peter Winkler. The Swiss Embassy and the International Committee of the Red Cross have imposed total secrecy on his whereabouts and the date of his departure from Lebanon.

The Voice of Lebanon's correspondent, however, learned a short time ago that Winkler left for Larnaca via Beirut port this evening. The ship which he boarded could not dock at Juniyah Port because of the stormy weather. Winkler was accompanied by Red Cross official (Michel Meyer).

RFL on Abductors' Identity

NC1812063988 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Peter Winkler, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] in the South, left Lebanon for Larnaca via Beirut port last night.

In the meantime, the Swiss foreign minister has disclosed that Sweden's ambassador to Damascus acted as a mediator to secure Winkler's release. He added that Winkler's abductors had identified themselves as members of the socialist Revolutionaries Organization [Munazzamat al-Ishtrakiyin al-Thawriyin].

He noted that Switzerland had not responded to the kidnappers' demands which, as conveyed to the Swiss ambassador in Damascus [as heard], could be summed up as the release of Muhammad al-Harriri, who has been awaiting trial in Switzerland since February.

An ICRC spokesman has pointed out that the committee intends to resume its activities in Lebanon in full, now that Winkler had been released, and that it is interested in the release of all the other hostages held captive in Lebanon.

For his part, the ICRC chairman stated that all the representatives who had earlier been recalled to the committee's headquarters stressed their belief that the committee's activities in Lebanon should be resumed. [passage omitted]

Fatah Group Denies Involvement

NC1812163888 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1445 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The Fatah Revolutionary Council that belongs to Abu Nidal [Sabri al-Banna] has denied that it had anything to do with the detention or release of Swiss hostage Peter Winkler.

Further on Abduction of Belgian Physician Cools

Group Claims Abduction

NC1812161988 Paris AFP in English 1607 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Beirut, Dec 18 (AFP)—A hitherto unidentified organization on Sunday claimed responsibility for the abduction in southern Lebanon eight months ago of Belgian physician Jan Cools, a statement released here said.

Jund al-Haqq, or the Soldiers for the Right, accused Dr. Cools of spying for Mosad (Israeli intelligence) in an Arab-language typewritten message delivered to a Western news agency here.

The statement included photocopies of his passport, driver's licence, identity card and Belgian Army Reserve card.

Dr. Cools was abducted on May 21 as he headed for the Palestinian refugee camp of Al-Rashidiyah near the southern port city of Tyre, 83 kilometers (52 miles) south of the capital Beirut.

Further on Statement on Cools

NC1812173288 Paris AFP in English 1727 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Beirut, Dec 18 (AFP)—A hitherto unknown body on Sunday claimed responsibility for the abduction in southern Lebanon eight months ago of Belgian physician Jan Cools, in a statement released here.

Jund al-Haqq, or the Soldiers for the Right, accused Dr. Cools of spying for Mosad (Israeli intelligence), in an Arabic-language typewritten message delivered to a Western news agency here.

A prosecuting committee charged with "examining the proof is to pass judgement on the case," the statement said of the doctor who works for NORWAC, a Norwegian aid organization.

The statement also sharply criticized PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, whom it said was "descendant from a well-known Jewish family" and the "hired gun of the (Saudi Arabian ruling family) Al-Sa'ud dynasty," which it claimed financed NORWAC.

The Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC), headed by Abu Nidal and noted for its enmity toward Mr. 'Arafat, on November 6 said Dr. Cools was "in the hands of a Lebanese party that continues to investigate him."

The FRC is thought to be holding nine Belgian and French hostages. [passage omitted]

More Details on Statement

NC1812193688 Paris AFP in English
1928 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Beirut, Dec 18 (AFP)—A previously unknown group that says Yasir 'Arafat is descended from a Jewish family claimed responsibility on Sunday for the abduction in southern Lebanon eight months ago of Belgian physician Jan Cools, claiming he was a spy for Israel.

Jund al-Haqq, or the Soldiers for the Right, accused Dr. Cools, who works for NORWAC, a Norwegian aid organization, of spying for Mosad (Israeli intelligence) in a message typewritten in Arabic delivered to a Western news agency here.

"His real mission was to collect information on our Moslem Arab country's resistance and he chose to work at the Al-Qasimiyah and Al-Rashidiyah camps, while shuttling between Beirut, Sidon and Tyre and visiting various Lebanese and Palestinian humanitarian organizations," the message said.

A prosecuting committee charged with "examining the proof is to pass judgement on the case," the statement said.

The statement also sharply criticized PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat, whom it said was "descendant from a well-known Jewish family, the Koudwas" and the "hired gun of the (Saudi Arabian ruling family) al-Sa'ud dynasty," which it claimed finances NORWAC.

NORWAC's coordinator here, Oyvind Sagedal, declined to comment on the abductor's statement but said his organization's officials were "happy to receive word that he is alive."

He added that NORWAC awaited further news on Dr. Cools' condition.

In Brussels, a foreign ministry spokesman said Sunday that Belgium would look into the organization, adding that the abduction claim "may facilitate indirect contact with the captors." [passage omitted]

UN Envoy Asked To Lodge Complaint on Abduction

NC1612145188 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic
1400 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The Foreign Ministry sent a cable to Lebanon's permanent envoy to the United Nations, Ambassador Rashid Fakhuri, today to lodge a complaint against the abduction of four Lebanese citizens near Tibnin by 10 Israeli intelligence personnel yesterday. The four Lebanese citizens were taken to the occupied territory. The cable asks the ambassador to lodge a complaint with the Security Council against this act and to reserve the right to call a Security Council meeting and to ask the major powers to pressure Israel to release the detainees.

The Foreign Ministry sent a similar cable to Lebanon's envoy to the international body in Geneva, Ambassador Salim Naffa', instructing him to intercede with the competent quarters in the Red Cross International Committee to put pressure on Israel to release the detainees.

For his part, Minister Nabih Birri has sent a cable to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar on this issue.

Further on Abduction of UNIFIL Irish Soldiers

Disappearance Confirmed

NC1612154088 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic
1515 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Excerpt] In a telephone conversation with the Voice of Lebanon this afternoon, UNIFIL Spokesman Timor Goksel disclosed that three Irish soldiers were missing in the Tibnin area yesterday [as heard]. He said that the UNIFIL command is currently contacting influential figures in the area to learn the soldiers' fate. He denied any knowledge of the circumstances surrounding their disappearance. [passage omitted]

Hizballah Fires on Helicopter

NC1612175488 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic
1715 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] In an exclusive security report by our correspondent, Hizballah positions fired two RPG's at a UN helicopter trying to land in the village of Tibnin. The helicopter was not damaged in the attack, but could not land.

The UN forces are conducting continuous searches for three Irish soldiers, who were reported missing this morning.

3 UNIFIL Men Released

NC1712093888 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic
0927 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] UNIFIL Spokesman Timor Goksel has announced that the three Irish UNIFIL soldiers, who were kidnapped yesterday, were freed in the town of Tibnin in southern Lebanon today.

[Paris AFP in English in a similar report at 0928 GMT on 17 December adds: "The soldiers were turned over to the headquarters of the UNIFIL Irish contingent in Tibnin by the security service of the Shi'ite Moslem Amal Movement, which controls the surrounding areas, UNIFIL spokesman Timor Goksel said."]

70 Hizballah Members Arrested

NC1812080688 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0745 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Official Hizballah sources said this morning that the Amal Movement raided houses in the Tibnin area and arrested some 70 members of Hizballah's so-called

faithful resistance. The source added that popular anger and wrath prevails in the villages of Tibnin, Al-Sultaniayh, Kafra, Haris, and Siddiqin in light of the Amal Movement's stand on the abduction of the three Irish UNIFIL soldiers.

Hizballah Said Planning 'Fateful War' Against Amal

NC1712152888 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1445 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] AL-SHIRA' magazine cites informed sources as saying that Hizballah is preparing for a fateful war against the Amal Movement in West Beirut, the southern suburb, and the South. The magazine quotes sources it describes as independent who say that this planned confrontation between the two sides is being prepared in the suburb. The sources add that Amal and Hizballah officials are fully persuaded that it is impossible to avoid a second war, which will be staged in the Al-Shiyah area, Amal's principal stronghold in the suburb.

Observers believe it probable that West Beirut will be the scene of new security incidents between Amal and Hizballah despite the deployment of the security committee and the Syrian forces in the areas of conflict. This is demonstrated by the assassinations of members and officials of both organizations.

AL-SHIRA' also reports that Lebanese students loyal to an Islamic Lebanese figure have organized a hostile demonstration against Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din, deputy chairman of the Higher Islamic Shi'ite Council, in the Iranian city of Qom. They shouted slogans against him and pounded the car in which he was riding with their fists. Shaykh Shams al-Din visited Iran recently in an attempt to halt the deteriorating situation between Amal and Hizballah.

'Violent' Amal-Palestinian Clashes in South

NC1612170288 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1643 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Violent clashes have been raging between Amal positions and Palestinian gunmen on the Jinsnaya,' 'Ayn al-Dulb, Al-Qurayyah, Maghdushah, and Maria combat lines. The combatants are using various types of rockets and machineguns. Thus for four people have been wounded on both sides and traffic on the Coastal Road has become risky.

In the meantime, the Popular Liberation Army positions are exchanging rocket and machinegun fire with agent Lahd militia positions along the Kafr Falus, Lib'a, and 'Ayn al-Mir combat lines.

'Intermittent' Clashes; Casualties

NC1612181288 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Two pro-'Arafat Palestinian fighters were killed and four others wounded in clashes with the Amal Movement east of Sidon this afternoon. According to reports from the South, Amal gunmen manning positions in Maghdushah fired two 106-mm rockets at a Palestinian landrover fitted with a heavy DShK machinegun. The landrover was trying to advance from the outskirts of 'Ayn al-Hulwah in the direction of Maghdushah.

Immediately afterward, fierce clashes broke out on the Maghdushah-'Ayn al-Hulwah combat lines, while the situation became tense in Jinsnaya, 'Ayn al-Dulb, and Al-Qurayyah. The Palestinian forces have been put on a state of maximum alert. Intermittent clashes continue at this hour.

Fighting Subsides

NC1612203088 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The clashes between the Amal Movement and the Palestinians on the combat lines to the east of Sidon subsided at 2030 this evening. They had spread earlier to Darb al-Sim and Al-Ghaziyah, and had caused the Al-Ghaziyah road to close near the Al-Safa factory.

The fighting, which began when the Palestinians attempted to advance on Maghdushah at approximately 1500 today, later spread to Jinsnaya, 'Any al-Dulb, and Al-Qurayyah.

Explosion Near Syrian Position in West Beirut

NC1612200288 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1945 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Within the context of operations targeted against the Syrian occupation forces in West Beirut, an explosive charge went off 15 meters from a Syrian post located in the Al-Safir newspaper building on Al-Hamra' Street, opposite the Kuwaiti airlines offices.

Meanwhile, the 705 unit of the Shaykh Subhi al-Salih forces announced that they carried out an attack involving machineguns and hand grenades against a Syrian forces assembly point near the St George Hotel. The Syrian forces subsequently carried out a large-scale search in the area.

Explosion Injures Child

NC1712092188 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] An explosive charge went off and another was dismantled by a military expert in West Beirut this morning. The blast took place at the entrance to the Syrian Army-controlled Shatila camp, injuring a baby

girl. The Hassunah building was cracked. A military expert estimated that 15 kg of explosive were used. The military expert defused a 35 kg explosive charge 150 meters away from the site of the first explosion.

More Details on Explosion

LD1712093688 Kuwait KUNA in English 0801 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Beirut, Dec 17 (KUNA)—A powerful explosion rocked West Beirut Saturday causing heavy material damage while an explosive device was dismantled by a military expert.

A security source said the explosion took place in Al-Fakahani area this morning inflicting severe material damage on buildings, shops and cars.

Another 35 kilogram of T.N.T. explosive device was found in the area and dismantled just two minutes before blasting.

The explosion destroyed a five-storey building and windows of nearby building were smashed.

Another explosion last night destroyed the office of Kuwait Airways Corporation in Al-Hamra street of West Beirut.

A security source told KUNA that unidentified men hurled dynamite sticks at the office, destroying it and damaging two cars parking nearby. No casualties were reported.

Another explosive device was dismantled before exploding in Al-Hamra commercial area yesterday.

Syrians Open Fire, Kill Security Forces Member

NC1712203688 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Syrian troops manning a checkpoint in Al-Hamra' [in West Beirut] opened fire on a vehicle which refused to stop at the checkpoint. The shots killed Marwan 'Abdallah, a sergeant trainee of the internal security forces, who was hit while walking on the sidewalk.

Source Discusses 'Awn's Decision on Crossings

NC1712125488 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Commenting on General Michel 'Awn's decision to reopen the museum crossing point, a responsible source has stated the following:

We hope we have overcome a crisis that was deliberately created to harm the dignity and livelihood of human beings. Those who decided to close the crossing point went back on their decision and reopened it. The crossing should never have been closed in the first place. What counts, however, is that the Ba'bda generals now realize that manipulating the people's daily bread is like playing with fire, that the food blockade is on a short rope, and that the magic of the blockade soon backfired against the magician.

The responsible source went on to say that the Ba'bda generals failed to humiliate the people and even failed to justify their failure. Anyone recalling the reasons on which the decisions to close and reopen the crossing were based will recall the well-known saying: You may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time. [passage omitted]

Museum, Franciscan Crossings Points Closed

NC1812065688 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] We have just been informed that the Museum and Franciscan crossing points were closed on the West Beirut side this morning.

Traffic Resumes at Crossing Point

NC1812103788 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Normal traffic was resumed at the Museum-Al-Barbir crossing point at approximately 1000 today, after a 3-hour closure. The Franciscan crossing point is still closed to pedestrians due to floods.

Group Claims Bombing of Voice of Hope Building

NC1812093188 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The Islamic Resistance has announced that this morning one of its groups blew up the agent Lahd-owned Voice of Hope building in the Al-Dardarah plain in Marj 'Uyun. The resistance issued a statement on the operation, saying that a second group had bombarded the area to facilitate the withdrawal of the first group, which managed to return safely to base. Grave losses were inflicted on the agent militiamen.

Transmission Posts Undamaged

NC1812114188 Marj 'Uyun Lebanon Voice of Hope in Arabic 1100 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] At dawn today, a group of saboteurs tried to attack the building housing the transmission posts of the Voice of Hope radio station in Marj 'Uyun. A few RPC's were fired in the direction of the building, accompanied by bursts of machinegun fire, but the transmission posts and equipment sustained no damage.

Immediately afterward, a South Lebanese Army force searhced the area. The force found and defused a number of 107-mm rockets ready to be fired at the posts. While the force was dismantling an explosive charge that had been planted in the same area, the device blew up, martyring two soldiers.

Further on Attack

JN1812100688 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 0930 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] An authoritative security source has denied the claimed destruction of the Voice of Hope building in south Lebanon this morning by the Islamic resistance, which is the military wing of the pro-Iranian fundamentalist Hizballah Party.

The authoritative security source stressed that these claims are baseless. All that happened, he said, was that RPG rockets and machinegun fire were directed at the Voice of Hope building, particularly at the station's antenna. No one was wounded, and no damage was done. The source stressed that the Voice of Hope continues to transmit its programs as usual.

IRNA Reports Bombing

LD1812161088 Tehran IRNA in English 1555 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Beirut, Dec. 18, IRNA—The radio station of Antoine Lahd mercenaries in the occupied southern Lebanese strip was blasted early this morning by the Islamic resistance Mujahidin.

A source disclosed that Mujahidin infiltrated the area occupied by the Zionist set up South Lebanon Army (SLA) at day-break, and totally destroyed the radio transmitter with bombs.

All Mujahidin returned safely to bases after the daring operation against the Christian mercenaries, he added.

Deputies Seek To Hold Parliamentary Meeting

NC1912124188 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Attempts are being made with a number of key figures in East Beirut, through Deputy Speaker Dr Albert Mukhaybir, to hold parliamentary meetings at Mansur Palace to draw up reform plans or a draft national charter that would take into account proposals made by the various parties in the past. The attempts include discussions with a number of deputies who met last week in the house of Deputy Kazim al-Khalil. While some sources expected these meetings to be held today, a meeting of deputies is expected to be held tomorrow in the house of former prime minister Rashid al-Sulh to discuss the current political situation in the country.

At 1000 today Dr Mukhaybir met with Auguste Bakhus, the official spokesman of the independent Maronite deputies bloc, in preparation for a meeting of the follow-up committee set up when the deputies met at Deputy al-Khalil's house.

Phalangist Party Leader Dr George Sa'adah announced today that the crossing has been opened for the deputies in East Beirut to reach Mansur Palace, folowing consultations he held with General Michel 'Awn, Lebanese Forces Commander Samir Ja'ja', and other key figures in the eastern area. He noted that discussions are taking place among the deputies in East and West Beirut, through Deputy Speaker Dr Albert Mukhaybir, to arrange for a meeting to be held at Mansur Palace.

Karim Paqraduni Leaves for Paris 17 Dec

NC1712175288 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Attorney Karim Paqraduni, deputy commander of the Lebanese Forces, left Beirut today for Paris for several days. While there, he will hold political talks.

Afghanistan

Soviets, Mujahidin Expected To Resume Talks

BK1712004888 Hong Kong AFP in English 1909 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 16 (AFP)—Soviet officials and leaders of the Afghan resistance are expected to hold a second round of direct talks in the Pakistan capital early next week, official sources here said Saturday.

Representatives of the two sides met earlier this month—for the first time since the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979—at Al- Ta'if in Saudi Arabia to discuss the release of prisoners of war and other issues related to the Afghan conflict.

Those talks have been described as preparatory and Afghan sources said they believed the Islamabad talks would be far more important as the mujahidin would be in a better position to coordinate their stand.

Officials sources said substantive discussions between leaders of the Seven-Party Resistance Alliance and Soviet officials might resume in Islamabad on Tuesday, adding that the Soviet Union had proposed the date.

In Saudi Arabia the mujahidin delegation was led by the Alliance chief Burhanuddin Rabbani while the Soviet side was headed by First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuliy Vorontsov.

The officials said Mr. Rabbani, who is on a European tour, was expected to return to Pakistan for the talks by the weekend.

The talks in Islamabad are also considered important because they come on the heels of new peace proposals from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Mr. Gorbachev, speaking before the United Nations General Assembly on December 7, called for a ceasefire in Afghanistan from January 1 monitored by a U.N. Peace-Keeping Force.

He also called for a halt to arms supplies to both the mujahidin and the Afghanistan Government in a bid to facilitate the formation of a broad-based government in Kabul.

The rebels have so far shown no sign of willingness to include the ruling Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in a future government.

Official sources said the fact that Moscow had agreed to talk to the mujahidin indicated some progress towards a resolution of this issue.

Soviets 'Willing' To Drop Regime

BK1912005888 Hong Kong AFP in English 2122 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 18 (AFP)—Afghan resistance chief Burhanuddin Rabbani said here Sunday he believed Moscow was willing to abandon the current Afghan regime.

He added that the next round of talks between then mujahidin and Soviet officials could prove decisive in resolving the nine-year old Afghan conflict.

Mr. Rabbani told a news conference on his return here from Europe that the Supreme Council of the Seven-Party Resistance Alliance would meet in the bordering town Peshawar on Monday [19 December—FBIS] to finalise the agenda for the crucial second round of talks with Soviet officials next week.

Officials of the two sides met in Saudi Arabia for talks on the Afghan conflict and a prisoner swap earlier this month.

Mr. Rabbani led the Afghan resistance delegation at the those diirect talks and is likely to lead the Islamabad round.

"We want peace and we are optimistic the Soviets will bring a new message (of peace)," he said, adding that "if they are sincere and wanted a quick settlement, we are also opposed to death and destruction in our country."

Mr. Rabbani described the Taif talks in Saudia Arabia as general discussions of the Afghan situation and an explanation of each others' point of view. But he said the coming talks could prove decisive if the Soviets made concrete and specific proposals.

The Soviet side in Al-Ta'if, he said, had stressed that the ruling People's Democractic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) must be included in a broad-based government in Kabul and called for a ceasefire in the country.

Mr. Rabbani added that the mujahidin had rejected both suggestions.

He said the Soviets were "on the verge of accepting the reality" and added that Moscow realized that the Afghan nation held the PDPA regime responsible for the killings of about a million people and the exodus of five million others.

Mr. Rabbani quoted Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, and head of the Soviet delegation in the talks, Yuliy Vorontsov as saying that "we do not insist on retaining the present regime (in Kabul), we want a new system and a new situation."

He said that if the Soviets showed good will, "we can guarantee that no obstacle would be created for the withdrawing forces."

But he added that all Soviet troops must leave Afghanistan by February 15 in line with the Geneva peace accords on the country.

He said the mujahidin would not atack withdrawing troops leaving by plane, providing the rebels were given notice of the number of troops being pulled out and the airports they were using.

Mr. Rabbani added that the strategic Salang Highway linking Kabul to the border with the the Soviet Union would be reopened as a gesture of goodwill.

But he claimed that the Soviets had not been sincere and added that they had deployed about 5,000 new troops in southern Qandahar and planes flying directly from Soviet bases were bombing northern Afghan districts, he added.

"Continuation of the Soviet offensives could sabotage the talks," he warned.

He also demanded withdrawal of Soviet Scud SS-1 missiles and other sophisticated weapons brought to Afghanistan since the signing of the Geneva peace accords in April.

Rabbani on 'Continuing Process'

BK1812165088 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The chairman of the Islamic unity of the Afghan alliance, Prof Burhanuddin Rabbani, has described their direct talks with the Soviet Union as a continuing process to achieve peace in Afghanistan and withdrawal of foreign troops. Briefing newsmen in Islamabad this afternoon on his talks with Soviet officials in Saudi Arabia, Prof Rabbani said they have outrightly rejected the Soviet demand for giving participation in any future government of the country to those who are responsible for the widespread damage, destruction and blood bath in Afghanistan.

He said during the talks they put forward four proposals, including completion of Soviet withdrawal by 15th of February next year and immediate stoppage of the new round of intensified air bombardment and rocket attacks on several areas in Afghanistan.

The chairman of the Islamic unity of the Afghan alliance said the second round of talks will be held in Pakistan at an appropriate date.

Mujahidin, Soviets Discuss POW Exchange

BK1812033688 Hong Kong AFP in English 1823 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 17 (AFP)—Soviet officials and representatives of the Afghan resistance alliance met here Saturday for talks on a prisoner swap, the government said.

The two sides met at the Foreign Office in Islamabad to discuss modalities for the exchange of prisoners of war being held by each side, the official statement said.

The talks, the third between the two sides, lasted more than an hour and were held at the request of the Soviet Embassy following talks here on November 28, when the rebels agreed to swap four Soviet prisoners for 100 mujahidin guerrillas, rebel sources said.

The four-member Soviet delegation were headed by Vladimir Krasilnikov, counsellor at the Soviet Embassy here, while the mujahidin team was led by Ghairat Baheer [name as received], an aide to Gulbuddin Hikmatyar head of the fundamentalist Islamic Hezb-e Eslami resistance faction.

Resistance sources said Saturday's session was not linked with the first substantive discussions on the Afghan problem held between Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuliy Vorontsov and resistance alliance chief Burhanuddin Rabbani in Saudi Arabia earlier this month.

Official sources said further negotiations would be held in the near future to finalise details.

Resistance sources said the mujahidin delegation had protested that the Soviet Union had deployed some 5,000 troops in the key southern city of Qandahar in "flagrant violation" of an understanding reached during the Saudi Arabia talks.

They warned that the move could endanger the lives of Soviet prisoners held by the rebels and added that the troop movement was resulting in the capture of more Soviet troops.

Moscow is seeking the release of more than 300 men listed as missing in action since the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, a member of the resistance involved in the talks said.

The talks were arranged by Pakistan and the United Nations officials last month, when the mujahidin offered to release four Soviet soldiers recently captured in Afghanistan as a "gesture of goodwill," he said.

He said the mujahidin had expressed anger at the Soviet decision to arrest 134 civilians and elders of Baghlan, a province north of Kabul where the troops were captured, in retaliation.

The Soviet side agreed to convey the mujahidin demand for their immediate release to the Soviet Command in Kabul, he said.

The Soviet side asked that the prisoner swap be on Pakistani soil, but the resistance retorted "we can not guarantee safe transportation in view of mines seeded on the routes and your Scud SS-1 missiles," the source said.

The Soviets have agreed to a mujahidin proposal to hand over the four Soviet troops to a Red Army commander in Baghlan provided the 100 Afghan mujahidin prisoners were handed over to a rebel commander near Kabul, he said.

"If the Soviets agree to this, the mujahidin can prepare for the next step in the release of remaining prisoners," a source close to Mr. Hikmatyar said.

He claimed that majority of the Soviet POWs were in his group's custody.

Protest Notes Submitted on Pakistani 'Violations'

Notes Nos 152, 153

LD1812100988 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0454 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Kabul, Dec. 17, BAKHTAR—The one hundred fifty second and one hundred fifty third notices of the Republic of Afghanistan on twelve instances of flagrant violations by Pakistan from Article Second, Document Number One of the Geneva Accords was submitted today to the United nations Good Offices mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP).

In the notices strict information on the nature of violations, date, place and damage inflicted are given.

It asks UNGOMAP that on the basis of Item Seven, Document Four of the Geneva Accords investigate the said violations and convey the results to the authorities of the Republic of Afghanistan and representative of the UN Secretary general.

Notes Nos 154, 155

LD1912102488 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 18 Dec 88

[Text] The Foreign Ministry office for coordination with the UN Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan [UNGOMAP] reports that this evening the Afghan Foreign Ministry's 154th and 155th memoranda on Pakistan's repeated violations of the Geneva Accords were handed to UNGOMAP in Kabul. These memoranda give accurate information about 26 cases of Pakistan's flagrant violation of Article 2, Document 1, of the Geneva Accords. UNGOMAP has been requested to investigate the violations mentioned in these memoranda and to inform the Afghan authorities and the UN secretary general of its findings.

Armed Forces Repel Rebel Attacks on Mehtarlam

LD1712174088 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1530 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] For the past 3 days the criminal extremists supported by the United States and Pakistan have been savagely attacking Mehtarlam city, capital of Laghman Province, firing 1,500 surface-to-surface missile at this city, martyring some of our compatriots, including women and children, and injuring others.

A BAKHTAR correspondent reports from Mehtarlam city that, with the advice of advisers from foreign countries, the extremist groups fired surface-to-surface missiles and shells at the city and then tried to assault it in an attempt to disrupt the people's peaceful life, loot their property, and set fire to public welfare institutions.

With the assistance of the patriotic people, the Armed Forces stationed in Laghman Province foiled this evil plan by the extremist warmongers through their brave resistance and inflicted heavy losses on them, thereby forcing them to flee. As a result, 39 criminal extremists were killed and 51, including an Arab adviser and 2 ringleaders, were wounded.

The report adds that as a result of the bombardment of the residential areas, 15 of our compatriots, including women and children, were martyred, 25 were injured, 5 houses were burned down, and 34 residences and 4 public welfare institutions were damaged.

Najibullah Praises Defense Effort

LD1912110188 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Message from Najibullah, president and general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee, to the people, Armed Forces personnel, and leadership of Laghman Province; date not given—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Esteemed governor and leadership of Laghman Province, tribal leaders, and brave Armed Forces personnel in Laghman Province, compatriot brothers:

We have been informed that the warmongering extremists carried out a dastardly attack on Laghman Province. They were attempting to disrupt peace, security, and calm in your city, villages, and localities; to set on fire or plunder public properties; and to violate people's honor. Fortunately, their sinister aim was foiled, and they were confronted by you, the true defenders of the path of peace and justice.

Please accept our best wishes and congratulations on your heroic defense of honor, calm, and security in Laghman Province and on the crushing blow to the enemies of peace and calm.

The state leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan and the PDPA Central Committee are proud of the timely judgment and measures by you, the leaders and respectable heads of the tribes, esteemed theologians, heroic Armed Forces personnel, leaders of the province, and all our compatriots in Laghman Province who showed firmness and bravery in ensuring peace and security with boldness and heroism to the point of sacrificing their lives.

We have always counted on the support of the masses. In your province, brave women, men, and youths from the city, village, and localities gallantly resisted the murderers' shameful deeds with full solidarity alongside the Armed Forces personnel in that province. They again demonstrated their firm intention to implement the country's national reconciliation policy.

The Afghan Presidency and the Armed Forces Supreme Command greatly praise the patriots' heroism to ensure peace and security. Those heroes who displayed bravery in defending the city, posts, people, and their peaceful life are awarded the medals and decorations of the Republic of Afghanistan and extraordinary promotions. The necessary assistance will be given to those who suffered.

I convey the deep condolences and sorrow of myself, the leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan, and the PDPA Central Committee to the families and relatives of those martyrs who sacrificed themselves in heroically defending Laghman Province. We all share your sorrow and pain. The pure blood of our martyrs strengthens our will and determination to achieve peace nationwide. We are sure that by continuing the struggle to ensure peace and prosperity for the noble people of Laghman and to achieve nationwide peace we will preserve for ever the memory of our martyrs.

The national reconciliation policy which enjoys the full support of the masses will become victorious with the help of great almighty God. Success comes from God.

[Signed] Najibullah, president of Afghanistan and secretary general of the PDPA Central Committee.

20 Killed by Scud Missile Fired Against Rebels

BK1912010488 Hong Kong AFP in English 2209 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 18 (AFP)—Twenty Afghan soldiers were killed and 60 injured when a Soviet-made surface-to-surface Scud missile hit a garrison post near eastern Jalalabad town, Afghan resistance sources here said Sunday.

The sources said four missiles were fired from Kabul against mujahidin positions but they failed to hit their targets.

Three landed in the Konarhar River and one hit the garrison post killing 20 Afghan troops and wounding 60. It also caused damage to several buidings near Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar Province, the sources said.

The mujahidin were in control of a large area of the province until the Afghan Army launched a major offensive in November.

The Afghan resistance guerillas were preparing to launch a big offensive against Jalalabad, 90 kilometres (57 miles) from the border with Pakistan, the sources said.

Soviet-made SS-1 missiles were first used in early November against mujahidin strongholds.

Mujahidin Operations in Various Areas Reported

Plane Downed Near Qandahar

BK1812031488 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] A report from Afghanistan says, mujahidin shot down a Kabul regime military aircraft near Qandahar, killing all the soldiers on board. Mujahidin attacked Zaker-e Sharif in the mountainous region of Qandahar Province, destroying four military posts. They have also carried out several operations near Kheyr Khaneh in Kabul Province and on Kabul-Jalalabad Highway, killing at least 20 soldiers of the Kabul regime. In these operations, mujahidin destroyed two security posts and two tanks.

Mujahidin ambushed a convoy near Delaram in Farah Province, killing or wounding a number of soldiers of the Kabul administration, including the deputy commander of the 17th Division of Herat.

Mujahidin also carried out successful operations in Baghlan, Nangarhar and Paktia Province, causing heavy loss to men and material of the Kabul administration.

According to a report, 40 soldiers and 35 party workers fled Jalalabad.

Action in Nangarhar

BK1912063288 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0600 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan say that mujahidin in Afghanistan inflicted heavy losses on the Kabul forces during operations in Nangarhar Province. The mujahidin captured some 40 soldiers and a large quantity of weapons, including several tanks and vehicles. In another operation, the mujahidin destroyed 18 security posts 30 km east of Kabul on Kabul-Jalalabad Road.

Prime Minister Addresses Refugees Meeting
LD1912100188 Kabul BAKHTAR in English
0503 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Kabul, Dec. 18, BAKHTAR—The joint work of the chairman, and members of the coordinating commission of the returnee affairs in creation of necessary legal principles for ensurance of the honorable and safe return of the refugees, especially in the field of restoration of properties, pardoning of taxes, granting six months military exemption cards, preparation of the ground for education, employment and job founding, and giving priviliges and rendering assistance to the returnees are praise-worthy, said Dr. Mohammad Hasan Sharq, prime minister of the Republic of Afghanistan (RA) in his speech on the joint session of the coordinating commission of the returnee affairs held here today.

The Government of the RA, the prime minister added, has made extensive efforts to attract international aids, especially UN and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assistance in order to provide urgent material aids to the refugees. The international community has responded positively to this urgent need of the people of Afghanistan and the UN secretary general has appointed a well-known world personality, Shahzada Sadruddin Aga Khan, as organisor of the extraordinary aids of the international community to RA. His humanitarian efforts for solution of the resettlement issue of the repatriates and rehabilitation of the economy of our war-stricken country have given us much hope. We appreciate their efforts.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction from the work of UN delegations and added that so far five assessment delegations from organising office of the international community aids to the RA have carried out successful operations in different parts of our country under the name of "Salam" i.e. "peace" and provided a complete list of the requirements of the people from different places. A number of the special UN agencies especially UNHCR under supervisions of the organising office of the international community aids and with the cooperation of the state and government of the RA has started a series of practical measures for rendering assistance to different parts of the country.

Dr. Sharq went on to say: "Availing the opportunity I want to express gratitudes of the government to Shahzada Sadruddin Agha Khan for his humanitarian endeavours in the field of resettlement of the repatriates and rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

"We", added the prime minister, "thank the Soviet Union which has put the greatest figure of assistance without any former pre-requisite at the disposal of the organisor of the international community aids for the people of Afghanistan. [no end quotation marks as received]

The national reconciliation policy and recent proposals of the president of the Republic of Afghanistan, Najibullah, for collecting an annihilating armaments from the country and convening of an international conference for guaranteeing permanent neutral status of Afghanistan, in reality, are charted out for the immediate realisation of the legitimate wishes and wills of the Afghan people for the cessation of war in the country, the prime minister went on.

The constructive initiatives proposal by the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev in the 43rd sessions of the UN General Assembly in New York recently, practically enriched the series of measures and achievements taken for the cessation of the fratricidal war in the Republic of Afghanistan, Sharq stressed.

Participation of Yuliy Vorontsov, ambassador of the Soviet Union to the Republic of Afghanistan, in the Al-Ta'if talks organised by the Soviet leadership with the agreement of the Republic of Afghanistan is the manifestation of sincere strivings of our countries for the creation of national accord among Afghans, Sharq added.

"During my stay in New York, I assured the UN secretary general that we will spare no efforts for the creation of a broad-based government and acceptable to all the warring sides", Sharq emphasized.

He expressed confidence that with the creation of peaceful conditions in the country, the process of the return of the Afghan refugees to their ancestral land will be expedited. The Afghan refugees, he added, are fed up with the peevish life they are leading abroad and thus are impatiently awaiting to return to their home land.

The establishment of appropriate coordination between the coordinating commission on returnees' affairs and the agency of UN High Commissioner on Refugees in Kabul as well as with that of the organiser of special assistance of the world community to the Republic of Afghanistan constitute the commission's main task, the Afghan prime minister emphasized. Such a coordination, he continued to say, shall tremendously help in the sound conduct of the refugees' affairs.

The prime minister expressed the full readiness of the government to assist and guide the Afghan commission on refugees' affairs for the establishment of coordination in their activities with international organisations.

Foreign Minister, UN Secretary General Confer
LD1912095488 Kabul BAKHTAR in English
0512 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Kabul, Dec. 18, BAKHTAR—'Abdul Wakil, minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan met with Perez de Cuellar, the UN secretary general, at the

UN European headquarters in Geneva. 'Abdul Wakil heads an Afghan delegation to the 43rd session of UN General Assembly held in Geneva on Palestine issue.

At the meeting, the Afghan foreign minister drew the attention of the UN secretary general on the resolution adopted by the 43rd session of UN General Assembly regarding the situation in Afghanistan. He called for the appropriate endeavours to be exerted by the secretary general on the implementation of the proposals put forward by the Republic of Afghanistan especially the one on the convocation of the holding an international conference regarding the reassertion of the neutrality status and demilitarization of Afghanistan.

The Afghan foreign minister stated that the latest proposals made by the Soviet leader on Afghanistan play an important role in the creation of peace and stability in the country.

Reciprocally, the UN secretary general praised the constructive proposals put forward by the leaderships of the Republic of Afghanistan as well as by the Soviet leader on the solution of the situation around Afghanistan. He considered the latest proposal on convening an international conference for the reassertion of the status of neutrality and demilitarisation in Afghanistan as a valuable step towards creating peace in Afghanistan and the region at large.

The UN secretary general, Perez de Cuellar assured the Afghan foreign minister that the UNO has already taken appropriate measures in this regard and have arranged meetings with all those concerned in order to find out a mechanism for the implementation of the proposals and thus for bringing about a stable peace in Afghanistan and the region.

India

Gandhi Visit Unlikely To Resolve Border Issue

BK1812034488 Hong Kong AFP in English 1856 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 17 (AFP)—Indian Deputy Foreign Minister K. Natwar Singh said Saturday that Premier Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China was unlikely to resolve the long-standing border dispute between the two countries.

Mr. Gandhi flies to Beijing on Monday at the start of an official five-day visit.

Speaking on state-run television, Mr. Singh said: "The visit will help formulate the objective criterion to set in motion the process in this regard." He said resolution of the border dispute through peaceful means was the only alternative available to India. The visit would result in confidence building measures and open up more avenues of trade and cultural exchanges, Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Gandhi and his Chinese counterpart Li Peng are also expected to discuss the international and regional issues, including Cambodia.

His visit is seen as a major opportunity to break the stalemate in Sino-Indian relations, observers here said.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken off for 14 years following a brief but bitter border war, in northeast India, in 1962.

China still rejects the McMahon Line which was delineated by India's British colonial rulers in 1914 to delineate the border between the two countries along part of the frontier with Tibet. Tibet only became part of China in 1951.

India claims that China occupies some 38,000 square kilometres (15,200) of its land in the Aksai Chin Glacier. China in turn has laid claim to some 90,000 square kilometres (36,000 square miles) of territory in northeast India's Arunachal Pradesh State.

Eight rounds of official talks since 1981 have failed to resolve the dispute.

AFP Reports Agenda of Gandhi Visit to China

BK1812090288 Hong Kong AFP in English 0850 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Beijing, Dec 18 (AFP) - A nagging border dispute between Beijing and New Delhi will be high on the agenda during a five-day visit here by Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi starting Monday, diplomats say.

Tibet, Cambodia and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's latest Asian overtures are also likely to come up in the first talks in 28 years between the leaders of the world's two most populous nations.

Mr. Gandhi has visited more than 40 countries since he succeeded his assassinated mother, Indira Gandhi, four years ago, and publicly his trip to Beijing has touched off enthusiasm.

"There is no reason why Indian and Chinese leaders should not resume their dialogue after this hiatus of time," one senior Indian diplomat said here this week. "The potential for better relations is there and it needs to be tapped energetically," he said.

Observers say the nagging issue of where exactly the border lies between India and Tibet will be a key topic of discussion, though neither side expects an overnight breakthrough.

China and India fought a brief border war in the region in November 1962 and there have been isolated flare-ups since then, all stemming from the disputed McMahon Line, plotted in 1914 by India's British colonial overlords.

But since 1981, both sides have been working on a negotiated settlement, and Mr. Gandhi's meetings with Premier Li Peng and other officials will enable both sides to take stock of the past eight rounds of border talks.

Last week the official BEIJING REVIEW news magazine called the border situation "extremely unreasonable" but urged continued peace and stability on both sides. The Indian diplomat, for his government's part, described the situation along the frontier as "relatively calm."

Tibet is also likely to be discussed, although nationalist followers of the Dalai Lama, living in exile in India, risk being disappointed as Mr. Gandhi's government has acknowledged China's sovereignty over the Himalayan region.

Earlier this month the Dalai Lama's office released a letter, purportedly written by five Tibetans and smuggled out of the region, urging Mr. Gandhi to at least take up the issue of human rights with China's leaders. If he does, observers here say, the Chinese are likely to reply that Tibet is a solely domestic issue.

Cambodia, always a topic when Asian leaders come to Beijing, will be especially important this time, as Mr. Gandhi's government is the only non-communist one in the region to recognize the Hanoi-backed Phnom Penh regime.

China will also be interested in Mr. Gandhi's views on its rapprochement with the Soviet Union, particularly with a Sino-Soviet summit expected in the first half of 1989.

New Delhi is Moscow's closest ally in non-communist Asia, and some analysts say a 5.3-billion-dollar line of credit granted when Mr. Gorbachev visited India last month was intended as reassurance of continued Soviet support.

Commentary Views Ties With PRC, Gandhi Trip

BK1812142888 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Commentary by Sunil Roy: "The Indian Prime Minister Mr Rajiv Gandhi's Visit to China"]

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, begins his historic 5-day visit to China, known in the past as the middle kingdom, on Sunday night in search of a framework that may lead to better understanding between the two most populous Asian nations. Put together, the Indian and Chinese population exceeds one-third of the world's total today.

The Chinese leaders have welcomed the visit by a second Indian prime minister after a gap of nearly 35 years as a major event in Sino-Indian relations. China was less than 5 years old as young people's republic when Jawaharlal Nehru visited China at the height of ideal relations between any two countries in the summer of 1954 [sentence as heard]. Those were the halcyon days of great euphoria in Sino-Indian relations marked by goodwill and mutual trust.

Mr Gandhi's visit to China takes place in the context of a great many changes in international relations. No one would ever believe the American officials would be sitting with the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative to sort out problems of the past 13 years. The two superpowers—the Soviet Union and the United States—have had several summits to make the world a little more safe for humankind. All this would not have been possible had the wind of change and detente not swept the world.

During his rounds of discussions with the Chinese leaders, Mr Gandhi would not only be exchanging notes on the world and regional situation in general, but also in particular the important bilateral problems that disrupt relations between the two countries. One of them that soured the relations was the border dispute. It led to an open war against India in 1962.

China's leadership must be in a more chastened mood today than ever before. It had until a few years ago believed in talking to its adversaries from a position of strength. Reasoning was not in the arsenal of Chinese politics. Today, the situation has been reversed, thanks to the wrong-doings during the 10-year cultural revolution from 1966 to 1976 during which the old knowledge of the Chinese people was given a decent burial.

Mr Gandhi's stay in China will be much too brief to be able to see for himself the visible impact of modernization China undertook close to 10 years ago. The modernization drive made China believe that it needs a tranquil environment, not only within the country but also in the region and in the rest of the world. The Chinese leadership's on-going pursuit for modernization has made it pragmatic. In pursuance of this new policy, China invited Mr Gandhi a year ago.

In any move for improvement of relations with India, the border question would have to be accorded the highest importance. No wonder it would be high on the agenda. The efforts of the past 7 years at official level to reach an agreed solution to the border dispute fail to produce any tangible result. Even as the seventh round of talks were held in July last year in Beijing, Chinese forces moved close enough for a hand-to-hand fight in the eastern sector. Happily, they returned to their positions after the talks.

It is expected that efforts would be made during Mr Gandhi's visit to reach an agreement on the pull back of troops of both countries from their present position on the icy heights of the Himalayas. This is but one of the many areas in which agreement is expected to be concluded.

One important area of understanding could be in the field of science and technology. In the event of a framework being worked out to arrive at a resolution to the crucial border question, India-China relations are expected to gain momentum in other areas.

Sino-Indian trade has not picked up to the desired level despite the conclusion of a formal trade agreement more than 2 years ago. Within a few months of the cultural agreement being revived, exchange of films and other activities to strengthen cultural relations received fillip.

To make the visit to China more meaningful and acceptable to the people, Mr Gandhi has had talks with some left political parties with which China maintained party-to-party relations. Perhaps he did so to build up a national consensus on the sensitive issues like the India-China border. It is quite clear that Mr Gandhi's visit would have a long-term effect on the relations of both the countries as both have a common stake in peace for the welfare of their 2 billion people.

18 'Terrorists' Arrested; 4 Killed in Punjab

BK1712164288 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] In Punjab, 18 more terrorists have been arrested in the continuing raids over their hideouts since last evening. A big dump of arms and ammunition has also been unearthed during a raid in Talwandi village of Amritsar District. It included 11,000 cartridges, nine hand grenades, and some pistols.

Elsewhere in the state, terrorists shot dead four persons. They were a sarpanch [village headman] in Ludhiana, a head constable in Kapurthala, and two farmers in Amritsar District.

Security Forces Arrest 17 More 'Terrorists'

BK1812125688 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] In Punjab, security forces have arrested 17 more terrorists and their harborers during the raids at different places in the state. A large quantity of arms and ammunition have been recovered from their possession.

Two men of the security forces were injured when a patrolling party was ambushed by the terrorists in Gurdaspur District last night. The terrorists, however, fled the scene when the jawans [soldiers] returned the fire.

Security Forces Kill 9 Pakistanis in Punjab

BK1812125588 Hong Kong AFP in English 1216 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 18 (AFP)—Sikh militants gunned down a Hindu doctor and his son in Ludhiana District's Seora village Sunday, PTI said. The Pakistani intruders were killed in Amritsar District in three separate incidents as they were trying to cross over from Pakistan late Saturday, the news agency said. Six escaped during the firing, PTI said, adding that the dead were still to be identified.

In raids across the state, security forces arrested 14 hardcore militants and recovered a Chinese-made AK-47 assault rifle, four pistols and several rounds of ammunition, PTI said. Eight kilograms (17.6 pounds) of explosives and 18 detonators were also recovered from the militants, the news agency added.

More than 2,140 people have died this year in violence related to the Sikh separatists' five-year-old campaign for an independent homeland called Khalistan (land of the pure). Some 1,234 were killed last year.

4,600 People Arrested To Prevent Violence

BK1712012088 Hong Kong AFP in English 2037 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 16 (AFP)—Police arrested 4,600 people Friday in a bid to prevent violence during a 24-hour strike called by a Hindu community in southern Tamil Nadu State, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) said.

Police had rounded up 2,400 people earlier in the week, but the PTI quoted officials as saying that response to the strike called by the Vanniyars community had been poor.

It said protestors burnt six vehicles Friday during the 24-hour general strike called by the Vanniyars Thursday to press their demands for more jobs and university seats for members of the community.

PTI quoted officials as saying that government offices, banks and business establishments in Tamil Nadu functioned almost normally.

Stray incidents of violence were reported from parts of Tamil Nadu, the news agency said without giving details.

Train and transport services ran normally while police and para-military forces were on patrol in the state capital Madras to enforce law and order.

The Vanniyar Sanghatan (Front) claims that their community, one of 202 listed as backward in Tamil Nadu, comprises 30 percent of the state's population of 55 million population. It has demanded that they be given better oppotunities.

The state administration has accepted the demands "in principle" pending the report of a special officer appointed to investigate the Vanniyars' assertion that they make up a third of the Tamil Nadu population.

LTTE 'Arms Dump' Found in Tamil Nadu

BK1812150888 Hong Kong AFP in English 1458 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 18 (AFP) - Customs officials in southern Tamil Nadu State have found a large quantity of arms which they said belonged to Sri Lankan Tamil rebels, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) said Sunday.

The foreign-made arms, including more than 50 anti-tank rockets, bore the seal of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the main Sri Lankan Tamil militant group, the agency said.

The cache, which included 56 anti-tank rockets, two launchers and an unspecified number of bombs, pistols, grenades, detonators, activator switches, tins of acid and ammunition, was found buried in the sand in the coastal village of Periakuthagi in the Thanjavur District over the weekend, PTI said. Customs reportedly turned the arms dump over to police.

The news agency said the arms were worth some seven million Indian rupees (400,000 U.S. dollars), but did not say exactly where they were manufactured. Police were investigating the incident and had made no arrests as yet, PTI said.

A large number of separatist Tamils and civilians have fled to Tamil Nadu, the predominately Tamil Indian state separated from Sri Lanka by the narrow Pal Straits, after ethnic conflicts erupted in 1983.

Official on Gurkha Activists' 'Reign of Terror'

BK1812161988 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The West Bengal minister of state for hill affairs, Mr Tawang Dawa Lama, has alleged that GNLF [Gurkha National Liberation Front] activists are unleashing a reign of terror in Darjeeling. In a statement he said about 1,000 CPI-M supporters have already left their homes in (Tukwar) hill areas. He also alleged that the GNLF activists have set up roadblocks in Sonada and Bejonbari areas and set fire to six houses of CPI-M supporters at Mundakoti area.

The GNLF president, Mr Subhash Ghisingh, has however denied the allegations.

Vehicular traffic between Darjeeling and Siliguri remained suspended today as tension prevailed in the area following a clash between the supporters of the GNLF and the CPI-M. A 12-hour bundh [strike] was observed at Sonada.

Iran

Rafsanjani on Ties With U.S., Economic Issues

LD1812224188 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1632 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Speech by Majlis Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani at the proceedings marking the anniversary of Ayatollah Mofatteh's martyrdom, held at Shahid Beheshti University on 17 December; followed by Rafsanjani reading and answering students' questions—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. For a long time now, I have thought about visiting our brothers and sisters who are students of this great university, and God has now granted me this occasion commemorating the day of Unity of University and Seminary and also the anniversary of the martyrdom of our great thinker, Dr Mofatteh. There are many subjects to discuss, but my aim is to make this a forum for questions and answers. [passage omitted] I would like to concentrate on the situation of the revolution and on domestic, international, and regional conditions.

When a revolution occurs it changes the existing situation and brings with it new conditions. [passage omitted] Our revolution could have no supporters—apart from the world's oppressed people—because of its anti-Western capitalism, anti-Marxism, and antireactionary nature, and of course, Zionism is included in the first category. [passage omitted]

One of the weapons used by the arrogant powers is to create divisions among the people. In our country they used the minorities for this purpose. Enemies use the educational establishments to infiltrate our society. [passage omitted] The students have played and are playing an important role in consolidating our revolution vis-a-vis our enemies' infiltration attempts. Enemies tried to stir up nationalist sentiments and alienate any Islamic sentiments, thus creating a division between the university and the seminary. [passage omitted] Therefore, we should close this door to the enemy, not only in the educational establishments but in all the country's establishments.

One such establishment which they infiltrated was the military which existed before the revolution. Our Army was in fact taking orders from the United States. The United States gave the military orders and was in charge of the soldiers. We had advisors from various foreign countries, such as the United States, UK, France, USSR, Israel. Even our NCO's were puppets of those powers. [passage omitted] The contracts bore the Iranian signatures but were drawn up without their knowledge. This military presence was another enemy weapons which we

succesfully eliminated. We did the same in our industries. We curbed their infiltration in our industries. Of course, our machinery and equipment has partly been imported from abroad, but this is a seperate issue which I will address later.

Another weapon is political presence, which takes the form of designating political figureheads in the country as heads of various organizations. The revolution has also eliminated this weapon. We have cut off the foreign hands which existed extensively within our organizations. God willing, one day we will unveil these records and publish the history of our revolution in order to open the eyes of the next generation to the crimes and corruption of these foreigners who virtually ran our country, foreigners such as the United States who played the greatest role, and the UK which came second, and the others. We have eliminated all such influences and any which exist, do so in secret. Once again this is another issue on which I will later elaborate.

One problem facing Third World countries is their economic dependence. This has many dimensions. There is dependence on the enemy's industry and machinery. By the enemy we mean those who are trying to gain domination. The most important and the longest struggle is that struggle against dependency on colonialist raw materials and dependence on technical manpower for survival. For the sake of freedom, independence and society's salvation one should solve this problem. Of course, it is impossible in today's world to be totally independent. For instance, if the flow of oil to the United States were to be halted, it would become cold and life would be paralyzed. If Japan were to be deprived of oil for 3 months, its industry would grind to a complete halt. There are no esources inside Japan. [passage omitted] Such dependence exists in today's industrial world. Even if the Third World market were to close its doors to imports from the developed world, its industry would halt production. Dependence exists to some extent, and no one in the world can sever this link. Even in the scientific world, for instance a scholar disovers something new in the world and a physician makes a new discovery in a university; these would be used in other parts of the world. Obviously without such links in the world and if the people of the world stop using each others' experience, science would not develop nor would mankind reach true civilization. No one says that such links should be severed. But some sort of balance should be created if people wish to be independent.

There should be a balance acceptable to both sides of a deal. For instance, if one side refuses to supply spare parts for a machine it has sold, the other side should be able to deprive the counterpart of a commodity which can deliver a similar blow. Then the first side would learn that economic sanctions do not pay. But unfortunately, the Third World is not like that today. For instance, if we were to stop our sale of oil to the world, that would be used as a weapon. But when other rivals such as Saudi Arabia [as heard], Kuwait, and Iraq replace our production.... [sentence as heard] They have arranged matters in such a way that if part of the Third World deprives them of its products their work will go on. This is the problem of the Third World today.

Well, you young people probably have seen very few of our factories. We have not seen many either, but more than you. Go and see for yourselves. Then you will realize that there is so much machinery in this country which to a large extent depends on foreigners. For instance, we have to import a machine battery or spare parts. There are many projects which cannot be completed with the country's resources. For instance, suppose we wanted to build power stations now—which incidentally is vital for a developing country because it can do nothing without electric energy—we could not finish them independently. We can complete some of the parts, but a percentage of the work has to be done by foreigners.

Or in the case of complicated dam construction projects or in connection with such huge factories as Mubarekeh steel mill and Kangan gas and other similar projects in our agenda, we need to use resources of other countries. Unfortunately, most of these resources are in the hands of colonial powers, those who have political objectives. That is, they do not work for economic reasons only. Of course, a country such as Japan has no political ambitions, but the Americans have Japan in their hands as a lever. A significant number of Japanese companies are owned by Americans. That is, the Americans are shareholders. The United States has some sort of sovereignty over Japan, and we have realized in practice that Japan cannot do much without U.S. permission. Japan is fully captured in their hands. We have other reasons, including military issues, which is another matter.

The world today is under some kind of invisible domination. The mother colonial countries have some kind of invisible hegemony over key Third World industries. For instance, suppose we imported a factory at the cost of billions of dollars and trained the necessary manpower. Suppose that 80 percent of the necessary materials are supplied within the country. Even if 5 percent of the raw material is imported from abroad, that 5 percent can paralyze the rest of the factory. [passage omitted]

No man is an island. One cannot be fully independent enough to fence off his country. This is neither possible nor desirable.

But some degree of independence, by which a country can safeguard its policy, sovereignty, and will in running its affairs is desirable. In my opinion, contrary to the remarks occasionally made by some pessmists who say we cannot do anything and that the world is run by several major powers, any nation can reach independence if it is prepared to make sacrifices for a short time; that is, the sort of independence I mentioned, bearing in mind that the countries of the world are linked together.

With that idea in mind we should safeguard our sovereignty. This is where you come in. That is, the universities should solve this problem. University research work and hard work by every individual student, such as you, can help. Do not think that as individuals you will not be effective. On the contrary, if everyone thinks that he can get somewhere by solving a problem, be it in arts, culture, industries, and any other branch, you can solve the country's problems. Your most important task is research. [passage omitted]

Now that the war has been halted, we are in the reconstruction phase. In this phase we should think that the revolution has just started and we want to rebuild the country amid enemy conspiracies. The people should be content to some extent. You students, for instance, should limit your demands to some extent. You should understand the existing circumstances. We should move forward step by step with wide open eyes, to build our country—God willing—on the basis of what we said in our slogan: Independence, Freedom, and Islamic Republic.

This question, which I have received from a lady, says: In reply to a question asked by a German journalist on the Islamic veil, you gave an answer which was exploited by some at the university. Would you please elaborate on this issue?

I am not sure of the nature of this exploitation. [passage omitted] I should point out first that the Islamic Republic had no intention of taking a hardline in respect to the veil, without any purpose. We have repeated this issue of the veil many times. We do not force women to wear black, unless they choose. Islam is not concerned with the color of the veil or its form. Islam emphasizes that a woman should be well-covered. The ladies' figures should be entirely covered, except for face and hands. The hair and the rest of the body should not be seen by men. [passage omitted]

Do you have any plans for curbing inflation, which has become uncontrollable?

Of course, the government, the Majlis, and all the responsible officials are trying to alleviate this inflation. But the realities should be clear to the students, anyway. Hitherto, we have spent over one-third of our income on the war, thereby being unable to produce or import the people's necessities. You may claim that the bazaars are filled with such necessities. But if such items were sold at low prices, those bazaars would have been emptied long ago. The money for purchasing such goods should come from somewhere. How much oil do you think we sell? Compare our oil revenue, which is about $10 billion at present—we spent about $3-4 billion on the war—to 5-6 years ago, when we earned 7 times as much, and the population was at 36 million as compared to today's 50 million. The demands have grown as well. In the past, the main areas of consumption were in Tehran, Isfahan, and other such cities. I am from a village myself, and I know that many goods never reach the villages. We never dreamed of having refrigerators or having our water and electricity needs met. None of the cities' facilities were available in the villages, in most vilages. Since the revolution, however, most of such facilities have been made accessible to the villagers. [passage omitted]

To face supply difficulties, we have to take certain measures. First, we must increase the country's production, and in order to do this, we should inject the capital which is at present accumulated in the private sector, the banks, and the like into the production sector. However, there is no confidence among these people; most of them are afraid to show their wealth. So we should give them confidence to encourage investment. A factory cannot operate without the necessary machinery and equipment. We should supply these facilities, and to do so we need hard currency.

We have no hard currency. We are now trying to sign contracts with the foreign sources in order to import such facilities. We are trying to find ways of making production possible; to import equipment, spare parts, etc; and to encourage the private sector to invest the money—which is being spent on the black market or by hoarders—in the factories, instead. I believe that with such measures, in 2 to 3 years' time—if not hindered by political obstacles—our country will be strong enough to become one of the most successful countries in the world in terms of prices and consumption. We are all striving hard to this end, and—God willing—we will reach this stage. Of course, we should not disregard the obstacles. We do not want to borrow, if we can help it, so as to curb foreign interference. But we have no hard currency. On the other hand, if we borrow, we become entangled in political issues. We want to encourage the private sector, and this encouragement comes in the form of interest payments. The capitalist is concerned with making a profit. So, this involves the risk of capitalistic domination, the risk of the rich getting richer. We should therefore have some means of control over such matters so as to create some kind of balance.

With regard to the neither-West-nor-East trend of the Islamic revolution and the dear imam's emphasis on the point that there is no difference between the aggressive East and the criminal West, how do you account for the recent permutations in Iran-Soviet relations?

I believe, there is a comparison here on which I am able to elaborate to you students. Remember that from the onset of the revolution, we never had the motto of severing relations with the world. Neither is it logical to sever our relations. What we mean by neither East nor West is neither dominance by the East nor by the West. It does not mean that we should not have relations with them. We had never severed relations with the USSR, anyway, not even during the time they supplied the Iraqis with the notorious missiles used against Tehran. We nearly always suffered from Russian weapons throughout the war and from French weapons, too.

Nevertheless, we never severed our links with the USSR, despite their crimes against the Afghans. It was not expedient to do so. This was not part of our policy. We have always been among the nonaligned groups, and we have always stressed this point. We have an independent policy, and have reciprocal relations. We are friendly to the same degree as them and do not give in to exploitation. This is our policy. This is neither in contradiction of the imam's remarks, the deputy leader's remarks, or the remarks of the Majlis or myself. Yes, if you feel that we are in any way giving in to extortion, or that they have become in any way dominant, then you can object.

The United States has taken a special form. It is regarded as the symbol of our fight against arrogance. Moreover, the United States has and is working against us from all directions and with all its might. Therefore, we cannot establish relations with the United States. Regarding Israel, it is illegitimate, anyway. The United States at least has a legitimate position. Israel is on the other people's territory. In respect to South Africa, we cannot establish relations with it because it is racist. But we have established relations with the other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Germany, but we will never give in to extortion. Here is the next question: In view of the country's reconstruction and the acute need for foreign currency, have you given any thought to borrowing or not? I must say that up to this moment we have not decided to borrow any money. Neither has any one has offered to lend us money. That is, no country or government has told us yet whether we can borrow money from them.

We have thought of continuing our credit transactions, the same as we did during the war and before that. You saw in the Majlis that $1.6 billion was allocated to [word indistinct]. It was a similar figure last year, too. We have permitted the merchants to buy on credit, payable in 1 or 2 years. Of course it is not a good idea because they can overcharge for credit purchase. But we have no alternative. That is, we have to buy some things. This is a kind of loan.

We have permitted our factories to sign contracts with their trading partners and companies abroad. They buy goods from abroad and repay their debt by selling the end product. The government is not making budget allocations for this purpose. They must pay for the goods themselves.

We have not borrowed money from anywhere yet. Since the war has not quite ended yet, those resources classed for reconstruction in the international funds and other places are not considered seriously, for the cease-fire is not serious in the country yet [as heard].

One student has asked why have only five channels been used to restore relations with the idol—that is, the arch satan—and do you believe that these channels are sufficient and useful?

The tone of this question clearly shows that it is a protest. Nevertheless the question is unfair. In connection with the arch satan no official channel, approved by the Islamic Republic, is holding talks. However, there are plenty of messages. The Americans repeatedly send messages through Pakistan, Oman, their interests section in Tehran, via any arms dealer and whoever they can get hold of, and through ambassadors from other countries. The messages say that our main problem is to solve the issue of our ties. The issue of the hostages, frozen Iranian assets, and other similar matters are secondary issues, the messages say.

We have never replied that we are ready to talk to them about restoring links. What we have declared in public and what we say in the private talks in reply to the messages are the same.

We say: First, you are the one who is hostile to us. Why should we be like this anyway? We still do not know how much money we have there. Of course, we have a figure, but whether the Americans would accept our figure or not is another matter. In addition to the money we have there, we have military spare parts that we purchased before the victorious revolution and they are still in your stores. You should give them to us. About the hostages issue you have things to say. We have hostages in Lebanon, so do you. You have influence among the Christians in Lebanon, and we have influence among the Muslims. Well, we both try to free the hostages.

The issue of relations is not raised at the moment, because, thanks to the existing hostility between us, public opinion is not ready to accept this issue; and his holiness the imam is the decisionmaker on this issue. That is, this is not an issue on which anybody other than the imam can make a decision. We pass the smallest message that we receive to the imam, so as to keep him in the picture. About the five channels mentioned, and as to whether we deem them sufficient or not, I ask the writer to be brave enough to come and talk to us in person to tell us what these five channels are and where they are.

Another person has written a note to me saying: Your excellency haji aqa [term used for the mullahs who have performed hajj rituals], it is now 1145. Since I received this note some time ago and had not read it, I realize that the time is over now, particularly because we still have to present awards. I enjoyed talking to you and hearing some of your views. God willing, we will witness your educational progress. May your cooperation bring victory to the Islamic Revolution, God willing; and may God keep the imam's shadow over all of us.

Khamene'i Calls for 'Force' Against Israel

LD1612185288 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1530 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Friday Prayers sermon by President 'Ali Khamene'i at Tehran University on 16 December—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. [passage omitted] The principal topic of this

sermon, about which I would like to speak for a few minutes, is the issue of Palestine, the struggles of the Palestinian people, and the events which are taking shape amid the hue and cry surrounding the Palestinian issue. In my previous Friday prayers, I also made a brief reference to this issue. In the time between the two Friday prayers sermons which I conducted, that savage state waged an aggressive armed assault on certain regions of Lebanon, an attack which should serve as a warning to all Muslims, especially the Muslims of Arab countries located in the Middle East and near Palestine. It should put them on the alert.

Some imagined and even propagated that the Zionist government had put behind it its ambitious aims of expansion from the Nile to the Euphrates. They imagined that Israel would be content to live a peaceful and secure life in that partitioned Palestinian country. This incident, however, proves how wrong and contrary to reality their imagination is.

Recently, many bitter incidences have been occuring in Lebanon, behind which the hands of the global arrogance have most certainly been active; there is no doubt of this. They formed an illegal and unlawful Maronite government and prevented the election of a president. They did not even abide by the previous regulations—which were also wrong and colonialist and unacceptable to the majority of the Lebanese people, meaning the Muslims—although the old system was wrong, it made possible some kind of order. Instead they put a military man in power, gave him resources, spread the necessary propaganda in his favor, and thus formed a government alongside the Lebanese government. Without doubt this has revealed the hand of arrogance in Lebanese events.

The issue is that Lebanon, in view of global arrogance and the United States, is a country which should be governed, just like occupied Palestine, with the same sort of order, based on the same policy as that of occupied Palestine. They aim to achieve that by either imposing a partition in Lebanon, or by the formation of a racist, 100-percent-dependent government similar to the one which exists in East Beirut today. This is their aim, but it is obvious that the Lebanese Muslims will not remain passive, as they so far have not. They have resisted such aims.

It should be mentioned that the hand of the arrogance is behind the internal problems of the Lebanese Muslims. These conflicts and bloodshed among the Lebanese Muslims, and especially among the Lebanese Shi'ites—as happened recently—are extremely dangerous, and 100-percent colonialist. It could not have been out of nationalistic, religious, or tribal motives.

In any case, the Lebanese Muslims and the Palestinians have resisted and maintained the previous situation. In the meantime, the Zionist regime revealed its intention to tip the balance of power in Lebanon in favor of the racists and Phalangists by attacking south Beirut. They landed forces in an area about 20 km from Beirut a few days ago, the reports of which you have heard on domestic and foreign media.

Perhaps the main reason for this move was to play a part in the creation of a government as desired by the United States. In any case, it was a move against the interests of the Lebanese people. It was in the interests of arrogance and perpetrated by the Zionists in Lebanon. What does this mean? Why would a country carry out an attack by air, sea, and land against a country in which it apparently has no business? This is all due to the ambitions and self-seeking of the Zionist regime, motives which have existed since the day it was born.

This should awaken all Muslims. Those who thought that after about 40 years the Zionist regime is now content with Palestine and no longer is greedy should realize that they were mistaken. The Israeli regime only talks about Palestine if it is threatened. As soon as it senses that it is no longer threatened by the Palestinians, Arab states, or Islamic nations, and that that usurping regime has been accepted and will be allowed to remain in Palestine in safety, it starts to covet other countries and neighboring lands. No doubt this will continue to happen in the future.

In such dangerous circumstances and despite the existance of this threat, one regrettably sees that some people, who speak on Palestine's behalf and consider themselves leaders of the Palestinian movement, accept UN Resolution 242, which guarantees the safety of the Zionist regime. That is really regrettable. It really calls for objections from the Muslim nations. I am surprised that wise men and revolutionary people in Islamic countries have not objected to it. Perhaps there are objections which were suppressed.

Of course, we have no objection at all to the formation of a Palestinian government. That is our wish. We pray to God for the formation of a Palestinian government led by Palestinians and those who truly fight for Palestine. However, the movement which has taken shape for the setting up of a government-in-exile by the PLO leaders is hypothetical and a fiction. But the other reason for this-- which in our opinion is its principal reason—is that they really want to recognize, reconcile with, and have talks with Israel, and they really want to hold talks with the United States. They want to free themselves of the struggle and its problems this way, even though it was not really their struggle. It is a delusion to think that they can stop the Palestinian people from fighting, take away their weapons, or that the Palestinians no longer will miss their homeland because they now have a government-in-exile.

But they really can demoralize and take away the Palestinians' motivation and turn them into hollow beings. This is what the PLO leaders have unfortunately done, and they have received nothing in return. They sat around and approved and signed a resolution to reconcile with the

United States and Israel, but now the United States and Israel say they do not accept this. Of course they do not accept it. Of course, they do not want to see a single Palestinian left in the world. Of course, they do not want to give an inch of that land to anybody. This deal was totally one-sided. The Palestinian nation gained absolutely nothing by it. Those who signed it were fooled, and now they want to sacrifice the Palestinian nation.

Of course, I believe that the Palestinian nation will not yield. [chanting from the crowd] Very well. Please...the struggles going on today in the occupied territories, in the Gaza Strip, in Jerusalem, and in the West bank are truly a struggle. Even on those days when the Palestinians pour into the streets to protest, world propaganda attributes their protest to approval for the words of 'Arafat, who delivered a speech and made up with the United States. Well, if they want to express approval, why are they fighting? [passage omitted]

If they wanted to make peace with Israel, if they wanted to make peace with the United States, as was asserted in those gentlemen's speeches, why are they fighting? Their struggle demonstrates that they do not accept it; their armed struggle—with stones, of course because poor people have no other weapon—their battle, using sticks and stones and their bare hands against that merciless and brutal regime demonstrates the fact that they do not accept any deal with that enemy. How could they approve of that one-sided deal which the leaders of the PLO have made?

At any rate, we, the Iranian Government and the Iranian nation, will not accept reconciliation with usurping parties as long as the Zionists possess even one inch of holy Palestine. We believe that force and strength are the only proper manner to confront them. [crowd chants: "Death to Israel," "Death to the United States"] There is no other way of addressing that usurping, brutal, and oppressive regime than with force and with strength, the same methods which they themselves used to usurp Palestine. Neither is the partition of Palestine is acceptable. The same logic that tells us that to save Palestine from the clutches of the usurpers and occupiers there must be struggles. That very same logic tells us that all of Palestine has been usurped and not just a part of Palestine, and it all must be returned.

We support the struggles of the people inside Palestine. We support the homeless Palestinians who want to fight the usurping government. We support those nations who back the struggles. And we reject any kind of deal or negotiation such as those which some of the PLO leaders carried out recently. We consider such things very harmful to Islam, Muslims, Palestine, and the Palestinians. [Crowd chants: "God is Great," "Khomeyni is our leader," "Death to Israel," "Death to the United States"]

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Partition 'Not Acceptable'

LD1612130088 Tehran IRNA in English 1230 GMT 16 Dec 88

["Israel Must Go By Force, President Insists"—IRNA headline]

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 16, IRNA—President 'Ali Khamene'i Friday again rejected the Palestine Liberation Organization's recognition of Israel and pledged that Iran would no never support such a move.

"The partition of Palestine is not acceptable," Khamene'i said in his Friday prayer sermon.

"We will support the struggle of the people of Palestine and the Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian nation will not surrender to those who want to sacrifice this nation-...they will not give an inch of Palestine to anybody," he told tens of thousands attending the service at Tehran university.

"The way to fight Zionism is only by force and power and the same methods they (Zionists) use and nothing else."

The president was reacting to Wednesday's decision by the United States to start official contacts with the PLO which was seen by Washington as a terrorist orgnaization since its formation some 20 years ago.

The Reagan administration said it ended the boycott because the PLO had renounced "terrorism", recognized Israel's right to exist, and accepted United Nations Resolution 242—Washington's three main preconditions to start talks with the PLO.

The U.S. on Thursday made its first official contact with the PLO with a telephone call to the Palestinian guerrillas' headquarters in Tunis by American Ambassador Robert Pelletreau.

Since the declaration of an independent Palestinian state by the Palestine National Council last month, the Islamic Republic has consistently condemned any move which would legitimize the Zionist entity.

"We are not against the formation of a Palestinian government and we wish that such a government comes into existance headed by true Palestinian elements."

But the president added: "The movement which has taken form for the so-called government in exile by the PLO leaders is partly fiction and partly (an excuse) to accept negotiations with America."

Hojjat ol-Eslam Khamene'i stressed that the current uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was the "real, true and popular struggle" of the Palestinian people which contradicted what the PLO was doing.

"Those people whose children are killed in front of their eyes and those who are shot in front of mosques (in occupied territories) are showing to what extent they accept this damaging deal (recognizing Israel)."

Israeli troops on friday killed three Palestinians and wounded at least eight others in a fierce confrontation with demonstrators at a funeral in the West Bank city of Nabulus. The Palestinian death toll in the year-old uprising now stands at 335.

Meanwhile the credentials of the newly-declared Palestinian state's first ambassador Mondher Azeddine Dejani was accepted by the Algerian authorities today. Algeria was the first country to recognize the new state.

Further on Friday Sermon

LD1612121788 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Today, coinciding with the anniversary occasion of the birth of Her Holiness Zeynab Kobra, peace be upon her, millions of Muslims all over the Islamic homeland held the unity-creating rites of the Friday prayers at the prayer places.

The people of Tehran, meanwhile, as on previous occasions held the Friday prayers today at the Tehran University and the adjacent streets with Hojjat-ol Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i leading the prayers. We begin the news with a report on the remarks of the Tehran Friday prayer leader at the prayers today.

Hojjat-ol Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the Friday prayer leader of Tehran, in his remarks paid tribute to the occasion of the birth of the great lady of Islam, His Highness Zeynab Kobra, which is also Nurses Day. He then expressed gratitude for the round-the-clock efforts of the self-sacrificing nurses, and he emphasized the importance of the nurses' role in treating the sick and especially their role during the imposed war. He recommended that youth, whether boys or girls, should turn in increasing numbers to the sacred profession of nursing.

With the anniversary of the martyrdom of Ayatollah Dr Mofatteh, the day designated as the approaching Day of Unity of University and Seminary, the president expressed appreciation for the efforts of that great martyr in strengthening the unity of university and seminary as well as cooperation and unanimity of thought between the seminary students and university undergraduates.

Referring to his visit to Fars Province, the president thanked the people of Fars, especially the tribes of the province, for their constant presence on the scene of defending the Islamic revolution. He recommended to all the individual members of the nation, especially the youth, to continue to preserve their Islamic and revolutionary spirit.

Then, referring to Israel's recent attack on South Lebanon, Mr Khamene'i said: That attack must serve notice on and be regarded as an alarm for all the Muslims, especially Arab Muslims.

The president added: The recent attack by the Qods-occupying regime on Lebanon indicated that that regime continues in its expansionist policy, known as "from the Nile to the Euphrates", drawing on the assistance of global arrogance. Thus, that regime is not content with a territory with defined and specified frontiers.

Referring to the efforts of the propaganda horns of global arrogance in distorting the struggles of the Muslim people of Palestine, the president said: The people who fight the Qods-occupying regime with empty hands and stones and sticks prove that they continue to be strongly opposed to any accommodation with the enemy and or dealings with it.

In our view the partition of Palestine is not acceptable. As we have repeatedly announced, we agree to the establishment of a Palestinian government but a government over all Palestine territory, not parts of it.

The president also said: While supporting any kind of struggle by the people of Palestine against the Zionist regime, we oppose any kind of negotiation which leads to the partition of the Palestinian territory; we believe that to be detrimental to Islam and Muslims.

Daily Says Japan Mediating With Iran on Hostages

JN1712190588 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 16 Dec 88 p 6

['Imad Judiyyah dispatch from Beirut]

[Text] Prominent diplomatic sources close to Tehran have revealed to AL-ITTIHAD the existence of efforts by Japan to restore diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran and to resolve the issue of foreign hostages held in Lebanon.

Within this framework, the talks between Mohammad 'Ali Besharati, Iranian deputy foreign minister, and Syrian officials and Lebanese nationalist leaders during his recent visit to Damascus acquire a great importance since they partly dealt with the subject of Western hostages held in Lebanon.

Prominent political sources in West Beirut have told AL-ITTIHAD that during his talks with the competent parties, Besharati has affirmed Tehran's interest in achieving a happy end to the subject of Western hostages. The sources also revealed the existence of a serious effort by Tehran with the kidnappers to release the hostages, since their release will further contribute to the end of its international isolation. Their release will also strengthen the policy of openness, pursued by the Iranian Government, especially since this policy have succeeded

in restoring diplomatic relations between Tehran and Paris and London but not with Washington since the existing contacts about this subject have not reached any result yet.

However, prominent diplomatic sources close to Tehran have revealed the existence of Japanese efforts to restore diplomatic relations between Tahran and Washington. The sources told AL-ITTIHAD that the Japanese efforts in this regard are very fruitful and have covered a great distance, but they are moving slowly in the interests of their success.

The sources pointed out that Japan is interested in keeping its contacts secret and out of the media limelight to guarantee their success. The sources pointed out that Japan's contacts with both sides concentrate on achieving a package deal, which will be the starting point for the restoration of diplomatic relations.

The deal includes Washington's agreeing to release the Iranian assets held in U.S. banks since the end of the shah's era, which are estimated to be billions of dollars. Additionaly, the deal includes Washington's agreeing to supply the Iranian Army with modern U.S. weapons, particularly combat aircraft accompanied by spare parts, in return for Tehran's direct intervention to release the eight U.S. hostages held in Lebanon.

The sources revealed that Japan is conducting intensive contacts with U.S. President-elect George Bush to convince him to conclude this deal at the beginning of his term to crown its efforts by the restoration of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Washington during the first half of next year.

In this regard, prominent Islamic sources told AL-ITTIHAD that the release of U.S. hostages held in Lebanon is still remote at the present time because it is connected to some regional and international complications. They pointed out that current contacts made in this regard have not succeeded yet.

Commenting on this information, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, Hizballah spiritual mentor, told AL-ITTIHAD that the information available to him does not indicate an early release of the U.S. hostages held in Lebanon. He pointed out that he makes intensive efforts with the competent parties to achieve a happy ending to the hostages subject. Fadlallah explained that the regional and international complications that occurred prevent the speedy end of this subject.

Commentary Criticizes Iraq on POW Issue

LD1812203188 Tehran IRNA in English 2009 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 18, IRNA—Tehran radio said in a commentary Sunday that the Iraqi regime has backed down on a previous agreement for exchanging sick and ailing war prisoners. It said the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which has supervised an agreement between Iran and Iraq in that connection should try to make the Baghdad government fulfill its obligations and have it repatriate at least a remaining 67 sick and ailing Iranians in keeping with its commitment to the ICRC.

The following is excerpts from the commentary.

'On Thursday last week Iran's Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati sent a letter to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in relation with sick and convalescing Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq. In his letter he called on the ICRC to commit Iraq to a memorandum which it had signed (last month) for repatriation of sick and ailing war prisoners...

'As early as the first day of the scheduled repatriation of war prisoners Iraq withheld 22 Iranian prisoners without any explanation, and thereby violated the memorandum which it had signed...on the following days it withheld more groups of Iranians POWS increasing the number of unreleased war prisoners to 67.

'The violation of the memorandum for exchange of sick and ailing war prisoners indicates Iraq's unwillingness for repatriating the war prisoners. The Iraqi regime has stopped its release of Iranian sick prisoners with a view to capitalizing on the issue prisoners' exchange. It seems necessary that the ICRC should call the Baghdad regime to account and also ensure repatriation of the said group of war prisoners...The last round of peace talks in Geneva which ended without any substantial breakthrough in the talks warrants serious steps by the United Nations for a better progress of talks in the future.

'In addition to the topic of prisoners exchange the return of troops to internationally-recognized borders seems another condition in the process of peace talks in the future. As the UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and other UN officials maintain their regular contacts with the officials of the two countries, officials of world nations continue to stress the need for a speedy execution of the UN Security Council Resolution 598. Despite the universal concern, however, the tempo of talks has been markedly slow.'

Velayati Comments on Talks in Beijing

LD1712135788 Tehran IRNA in English 1355 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Beijing, Dec. 17, IRNA—Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati Saturday stressed the importance of ties with the People's Republic of China but denied Tehran had purchased arms from Beijing.

"We have not yet had military cooperation with China, nor have we requested to purchase sophisticated Chinese-made weapons," Dr Velayati said in a press conference.

But he said after the 20 August ceasefire with Iraq, there were "no limitations" in buying arms.

"For purchase of sophisticated weapons that we cannot manufacture we are looking for the best sources. However, no decision has been yet taken in this regard."

On peace talks with Iraq, Velayati said the last round in Geneva last month had not been successful in enforcing Resolution 598. The next round is expected to begin next month.

"I explicitly say that if we want to have the 4th round of the peace talks we should guarantee this round would be useful, or else we will be wasting our time," he warned.

He said there had been several clashes with Iraqi troops recently, and had also been sporadic shooting in some regions. "We have reported some cases of Iraqi ceasefire violations to the U.N. secretary general."

Chinese officials had stressed on the full implementation of Resolution 598 and voiced support for the U.N. chief's four point plan to get the peace process moving, he said.

On Tehran-beijing ties, Velayati said the two countries held talks to cooperate in setting up plants, participate in joint agricultural and industrial projects, and in the future, they could cooperate in manufacturing trawlers, laying railways tracks and constructing dams.

He denied that China had reduced its purchase of Iranian oil, saying that Beijing had honored a contract signed between the two countries during their fourth joint economic commission meet.

Asked about the possibility of resuming Tehran-Washington relations in view of the election of george Bush as the U.S. President, velayati replied: "U.S. hostile policy towards Iran has remained unchanged."

"Therefore, as long as Washington maintains its hostile policy, no changes will be made in bilateral relations."

Returns Home

NC1912063888 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Our Foreign Minister Velayati returned to Tehran last night following an official visit to the PRC and talks with high-level Chinese officials. The foreign minister spoke to a group of correspondents at Mehrabad Airport, and said: During my visit to the PRC, bilateral ties and international cooperation were discussed. The PRC officials reiterated the need for the complete implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 598.

Need for Cooperation With Gulf Stressed

LD1812184388 Tehran IRNA in English 1827 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 18, IRNA—A local English daily wants Islamic Iran to forgive Persian Gulf Arab states and "stretch hands of friendship" to the former collaborators in the Iraqi regime's 8 year aggression.

In its editorial Sunday the TEHRAN TIMES has considered as obvious feelers, interviews published in two leading Arabic dailies yesterday of two regional officials.

Oman's Sultan Qabus had told the Kuwaiti-based AL-SIYASAH "the need for the (Persian Gulf) Cooperation Council to expand ties with Iran..." while the UAE daily AL-KHALIJ had quoted Bahrain's Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad ibn Mubarak as calling "for burial of sour memories of the past..."

The paper believes these statements as "new policy", especially in view of the upcoming (P)GCC's Mondays session in Bahrain.

Following are some excerpts:

"The (P)GCC can be assured that in its dealings with Iran it is on sure grounds. The air seems just fine for the establishment of some sort of organization, like an economic cooperation council, embracing Iran and the (P)GCC members (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar). The preliminaries for such regional body can be put to debate now in order to prepare the ground for what can be a joint venture Islamic investment among the various parties.

"It is time regional nations stoped all this and, while making efforts to remedy past losses, focus earnestly on the region's politico-economic and cultural rehabilitation. Tehran, for its part, is ready to consider any new proposals and welcomes such in all good faith. Furthermore Iran is prepared to closely cooperate with the Arab Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (AOPEC) to determine sounder mechanisms for the adoption of common stands on oil issues.

"Given the recent statements of Sultan Qabus of Oman and Bahrain's Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad ibn Mubarak it is also suggested that the Sultan and the minister visit Tehran to personally hear the Iranian leaders on their serious and realistic stances towards regional issues."

Second UK Diplomat Returns to Tehran Embassy

LD1712133988 Tehran IRNA in English 1330 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] London, Dec. 17, IRNA—First Secretary Victor Welborn has returned to the U.K. Embassy in Tehran this week for the first time since being withdrawn with other British officials during a diplomatic dispute between the two countries 18 months ago.

He is the second diplomat to be posted to Iran since agreement was reached to restore relations last month. His rapid despatch to join acting Charge d'Affaires Gordon Pirie appears to mark Britain's anxiety to get re-established in Tehran as soon as possible.

Britain is behind most other European Community members in the race to expand economic cooperation with the Islamic Republic in the post-war reconstruction era.

West Germany's foreign minister was here earlier this month and the foreign minister of France and Italy are also expected.

The Tehran-London agreement made on 10 November calls for strict reciprocity in the number of diplomats, initially put at a ceiling of 16. Iran has yet to make applications to add to the existing charge d'affaires, while Britain has already put several names forward.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office told IRNA Saturday that there was a "lot of administrative work" to do in Tehran and that apart from Welborn, there was "quite a lot of staff waiting" to go.

He indicated his surprise in Iran issuing a visa for the 50-year old first secretary without a recriprocal move but felt that as his post was an administration officer and consul, it could be mutually beneficial with him starting to issue visas to Iranian applicants.

Welborn comes from a pool of 32 Farsi-speaking staff working for the Foreign Office and previously served as first secretary and consul in Tehran between 1984 and 1987 when the embassy was turned into a British interests section under the Swedish flag.

More Aid To Be Dispatched to Armenia

LD1712191688 Tehran IRNA in English 1850 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 17, IRNA—Over 60 tons of relief aid has been earmarked for quake-stricken Soviet Armenia.

Iran's Red Crescent chief Vahid Dastjerdi said Saturday the relief included tents, blankets, foodstuffs, medicines and other medical equipment. The first plane-load took off on Thursday.

Predominantly Christian populated Armenia which borders North-Western Iran, suffered a devastating earthquake last week, resulting in a loss of over 55,000 lives and half a million others homeless.

On Iran's humanitarian aid to other countries, Dastjerdi said the Red Crescent rushed 'jumbo-loads' of emergency relief to Bangladesh, Sudan and Nicaragua during natural disasters there.

Pakistan

Reportage on Reactions to Assembly Dissolution

Opposition Parties Protest

BK1712010088 Hong Kong AFP in English 2009 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Quetta, Pakistan, Dec 16 (AFP)—Parliamentary opposition parties held a rally here Friday to protest the dissolution of the Baluchistan Provincial Assembly and demanded that the central government reinstate it, witnessess said.

Speakers at the rally, called by the left-wing Baluchistan National Alliance (BNA), the religio-political Jamiyat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) and the nationalist Pashtun Khwa Milli Awami Ittehad also denounced the central leadership of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) for a "shaky start of democracy."

Baluchistan Governor Muhammed Musa dissolved the 44-member provincial assembly on Thursday saying that the move had been made under the country's Constitution on the advice of Chief Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali, a member of the opposition Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI).

Mr. Musa said he would form a caretaker government and announce a schedule for fresh polls on December 29.

PPP leader and Pakistan Premier Benazir Bhutto later said the governor had the right to dissolve the assembly because the house was evenly divided between rival sides.

But several thousand people attended the opposition rally here in the Baluchistan capital Friday to protest the dissolution of the assembly and chanted slogans saying that no group had a majority to form the government and rejecting fresh polls, witnesses said.

"Ms Benazir Bhutto contacted me on the telephone this morning (Friday) and I told her that we are committed to the immediate revival of the assembly," BNA leader Nawab Akbar Bugti said.

He said the premier had expressed unwillingness and Mr. Bugti warned that the constitutional crisis in Baluchistan could take "an ugly turn."

Mr. Bugti was governor of Baluchistan during the rule of the late premier and father of Ms Bhutto, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

He said Mr. Bhutto could not tolerate the idea of opposition parties forming a provincial government and added that "his daughter is following suit."

Ms Bhutto has said that she had no prior knowledge of the move to dissolve the assembly and that the central government would not intervene.

Mr. Bugti rejected a suggestion by Ms Bhutto that remedy could be sought through the Supreme Court, saying "we don't accept the dissolution and now we will go to the courts of masses."

The opposition has called for a protest strike on Saturday.

Bhutto Consults Politicians

BK1712090588 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] In Islamabad, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has held intensive consultations with some prominent politicians of Baluchistan, including her aides, to deal with the situation arising out of the dissolution of the Baluchistan Assembly. APP, quoting reliable sources, said the prime minister has reassured the political leaders that the federal government had no knowledge about the dissolution of the Baluchistan Assembly and that the federal government does not intend to interfere in any way to impose its own solution to any provincial issue.

Benazir Bhutto is said to be trying to bring about a consensus among the leaders of the concerned parties in the provincial assembly in connection with the formation of an impartial caretaker government in the province.

Musa Says 'No Governor's Rule'

BK1712092488 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Retired General Mohammad Musa, governor of Baluchistan, has said he and the federal government desire that Baluchistan Province should be brought back to the democratic path as soon as possible. He told newsmen in Quetta yesterday evening that the election schedule will be announced on 29 December and it would be his endeavor to have the new assembly formed in accordance with the Constitution.

The governor categorically stated that there is no governor's rule, but the rule of the Constitution in Baluchistan. He said the present government, led by Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, has resigned and that he has accepted their resignations, but he has asked them to continue to work until the formation of the caretaker government by Thursday [22 December].

The governor said that under the Constitution if any assembly is dissolved it cannot be revived through administrative orders. The courts are in operation and nobody is prohibited from seeking a court judgment. He categorically stated that the federal government had neither interfered in provincial matters in the past nor would it do so in future.

The Baluchistan National Alliance, Jamiyat-I-Ulema-I-Islam, Pashtun Khwa Milli Awami Ittehad, and Awami National Party staged a joint protest rally in Quetta yesterday. Addressing the rally, the speakers strongly criticized the dissolution of the Baluchistan Assembly.

Dissolution 'Constitutional'

BK1812043088 Hong Kong AFP in English 0413 GMT 18 Dec 88

[By Sami Zubeiri]

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 18 (AFP)—Benazir Bhutto promised a new era of democracy and peace after 11 years of military rule but some two weeks after taking power as Pakistan premier she faces a host of domestic political problems.

Her first two weeks in power have been marked by the controversial dissolution of the Baluchistan Provincial Assembly, a confrontation with the opposition-run government in powerful Punjab Province and a renewal of ethnic violence in her home province of Sind.

Baluchistan Governor Muhammed Musa surprised political circles Thursday by dissolving the provincial assembly on the advice of Chief Minister Zafarullah Jamali—a member of the opposition Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI).

The move came just after Ms Bhutto had received plaudits for releasing hundreds of political prisoners jailed under the martial law regime of the late President Muhammed Ziaul Haq, who died in a plane crash in August.

It also came as she was facing problems with the Punjab government led by Nawaz Sharif of the IJI and appeared to pour some cold water on talks of a return to democracy, analysts said.

Ms Bhutto and the governor have said the move was constitutional as the house was evenly divided and no group could form a stable government in Baluchistan but others have said she is sabotaging the democratic process and does not want to see an opposition party running the assembly.

The parliamentary opposition staged a walkout and decided to boycott the entire National Assembly session, which is currently debating the budget, following news of the dissolution of the Baluchistan assembly.

The opposition has rejected fresh polls in Baluchistan and demanded the immediate reinstatement by Ms Bhutto's government of the provincial assembly, while traders in the Baluchistan capital Quetta heeded an opposition strike call Saturday by closing their shops in protest, witnesses said.

"They (the opposition) should either go to court or seek a public verdict" through fresh elections, expected in 60 days, Ms Bhutto suggested as the only way to overcome the crisis in Baluchistan.

Abdul Wali Khan, a Pathan nationalist and leader of the pro-Moscow Awami National Party [ANP], has also taken sides against the government and joined the boycott.

His defection is seen as a blow as the ANP shares power with Ms Bhutto's ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the North West Frontier Province.

A further sign of danger was signalled by Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, a leader of the IJI, who said at a rally in nearby Rawalpindi that the "time was not far when the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) would also come to us."

The PPP shares power with the MQM in southern Sind Province, where fresh ethnic rioting in the provincial capital Karachi left six people dead Thursday.

A curfew was clamped in the city and the Army called out for the first time since the November 16 polls that brought Ms Bhutto to power.

The MQM represents Urdu-speaking settlers from India who regularly clashed with local Sindhis during the rule of General Zia.

Informed sources said Ms Bhutto believed that the trouble in Karachi had been engineered in an attempt "to tarnish the democratic image of the PPP."

Analysts here said her stress on elections could have major political repercussions adding that nationalists in Baluchistan could emerge stronger, a prospect that is unlikely to appeal to either the PPP or the IJI.

They noted that the opposition had begun moves to form an alliance in a possible bid to nip the new government in the bud.

Special Adviser on 'Conspiracy'

BK1812154088 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Syed Ifteqar Hussain Gilani, special adviser to the prime minister, has said that the government will not in any manner violate the Constitution to overcome the crisis arising out of the dissolution of Baluchistan Assembly. He said this while speaking to newsmen in Peshawar today.

In reply to a question, he said that under Article 184 of the Constitution, the federal government does not have the right to file reference in the court regarding this problem. He said only the affected party can file reference in the court. Syed Ifteqar Hussain Gilani described the dissolution of the Baluchistan Assembly as a conspiracy against the Pakistan People's Party government.

Baluchistan Speaker Protests

BK1812160988 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Speaker of the Baluchistan Assembly Sardar Mohammad Khan (Maruzi) has protested over the dissolution of the assembly. Addressing a news conference in Quetta this evening, he said although the chief minister has the right to advise the governor to dissolve the assembly, the proper method would have been to consult the prime minister and the assembly speaker before giving this advice. He said were the chief minister given intimation to the prime minister or the speaker, the latter would have definitely suggested to him not to dissolve the assembly so soon.

He said this extreme step has pained the prime minister, federal government, speaker and the whole nation. Although the action of the chief minister has constitutional protection, it was an unwise step, which would leave bad effects on our politics. He said the prime minister wished to settle the dispute of the election of the chief minister of Baluchistan in the provincial assembly.

In response to questions on the allegation of the support of the opposition to the disputed chief minister, the speaker said the opposition party did not move any no-confidence motion against the chief minister and the speaker was not given any such notice. Had the opposition party done so, the chief minister would not have advised the governor to dissolve the assembly. He said once the assembly is dissolved, it can in no way be revived. Now the only solution is to hold re-election.

Opposition Boycotts Budget Session

BK1812164488 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The opposition political parties at a meeting in Islamabad today decided to continue their boycott of the budget session of the National Assembly and demanded immediate restoration of the dissolved Baluchistan Assembly. This was stated by the leader of the IJI [Islami Jamhoori Ittehad], Mr Nawaz Sarif, while briefing newsmen after the meeting. He said the meeting was unanimous in the opinion and conviction that the center, especially the prime minister, had prior knowledge of the action. He pointed out that the governor was the representative of the federation in the province and it is difficult to agree with the contention that the prime minister had no prior knowledge of the dissolution. He said a 10-member committee has been set up to decide the future course of action.

Those who attended the meeting include Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Mr Nawaz Sharif, Mr Ghulam Haider Wain, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, Maulana Abdus Sattar Niazi, Mr Akhtar Bukti, Begum Seyyada Abida Hussain, and Chowdhury Shujat Husssin.

Baluchistan Cabinet Meets

BK1812170688 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] The Baluchistan cabinet met in Quetta today. The chief minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who presided, highlighted the recent constitutional steps taken by the governor as a result of which the provincial assembly had been dissolved.

The cabinet approved the steps and described the dissolution as unpleasant but constitutional and legal.

Bhutto Invites Gandhi To Extend Stay After Summit
BK1712003888 Hong Kong AFP in English 1838 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 16 (AFP)—Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhuto has invited her Indian counterpart Rajiv Gandhi to extend his scheduled visit to Pakistan later this month by a few hours, sources close to the premier said Saturday.

Mr. Gandhi is due to attend the three-day summit meeting, starting here on December 29, of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) along with leaders of the other SAARC members—Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Mr. Gandhi was reportedly planning to leave immediately after the summit, but the sources here said Ms Bhutto had asked the Indian premier to extend his stay by a few hours to allow the two leaders to discuss bilateral issues.

It was not immediately known if Mr. Gandhi had agreed to stay longer.

One source said the request had been made "as it would be in the interest of both the countries (Pakistan and India) to solve their disputes.

"We hope the peace efforts will gain momentum by the talks she (Ms Bhutto) is planning," the source said.

Pakistan and India have been to war against each other three times since gaining independence in 1947.

Outstanding differences include the claims of both countries to sovereignty over the northern Kashmir area and the strategic Siachen Glacier.

India has also accused Pakistan of supporting Sikh separatists fighting for an independent homeland in northern India's Punjab State. Islamabad denies the charge.

The two countries are also suspicious about each other's nuclear programmes and military build-ups.

In a separate development, Sultan Mehmud, leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Moslem Conference said his party would stage demonstrations during Mr. Gandhi's visit here because "his hands were stained with the blood of Kashmiris."

Protest rallies would be held in the Pakistan cities of Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar as well as in major cities in Pakistani-held areas of Kashmir, he told journalists.

But he said the party would not hold demonstrations in Islamabad but would instead send representatives to the Indian Embassy here with a petition demanding a self-determination referendum in India's Jammu and Kashmir State.

Protest marches would be held simultaneously in some European capitals, he added.

Situation in Karachi Reported 'Peaceful'
BK1612154788 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The situation in all four districts of Karachi Division is peaceful and no untoward incident has been reported from any part of the city. A press note issued by the Karachi administration says that police and law enforcement agencies are patrolling and guard posts are being set up. Efforts are being made to trace the culprits in yesterday's incident. The administration has decided to ban men from pillion riding on motorcyles and scooters. The citizens have been asked to cooperate with the administration because this step has been taken in the interest of common men's safety and security.

The Karachi administration has announced that curfew will be relaxed from 0700 to 0900 tomorrow morning and again from 1700 to 1900 in the evening in all the curfew-bound areas.

As already reported, Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto has expressed deep grief and concern over the killing of innocent people in the incident of indiscriminate firing in Karachi. According to a spokesman of the Sind Government she said the democratic government cannot be cowed or harassed by such heinous acts of violence. She directed the Sind Government to take effective steps to restore law and order and expose the culprits. She expressed heartfelt condolences and sympathy with the bereaved and affected families.

Sind Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah has said that the cowardly act of unknown attackers in Karachi is an attempt to sabotage the democratic process. He was talking to newsmen in Karachi today after inquiring at the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital about the welfare of persons injured in the shooting. He said his government is determined to maintain law and order and all culprits involved in the incident will be arrested. The chief minister reiterated his government's determination that all people living in the province will be given protection.

Answering a question, Syed Qaim Ali Shah said the prime minister telephoned him twice last night and expressed deep grief at the loss of lives. She has directed him to take stern measures to deal with the situation and the culprits will be punished heavily.

Curfew 'Relaxed' in Karachi

BK1812031288 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] Curfew in the all the curfew-bound areas in Karachi has been relaxed from 0600 to 2200 [0100 GMT to 1700] today.

Sri Lanka

Polls Open Amid 'Unprecedented Security' 19 Dec

BK1912025888 Hong Kong AFP in English 0236 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] Colombo, Dec 19 (AFP)—Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa was among the first to vote here Monday in a presidential election he described as a "battle between the ballot and the bullet."

Polling began at 7:00 a.m. (0130 GMT) amid unprecedented security involving over 32,000 regular police backed by armed forces personnel, following threats by anti-government militants to disrupt balloting.

"This election is not a contest between individuals. It is a battle between the ballot and the bullet. I am confident the ballot will win," Mr. Premadasa told reporters shortly after voting.

He said he was confident of victory by a majority of over a million votes and expected a "satisfactory turnout" from the 9.4 million electorate.

The main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) candidate, former Premier Sirima Bandaranaike, who was due to vote at her home constituency at Attanagalle, 50 kilometers (30 miles) east of here, has also expressed confidence of victory.

Leftist hopeful Ossie Abeygoonesekera has vowed to give the two main contenders a stiff challenge, and political analysts said his chances of winning could not be totally ruled out.

The prime minister's wife, Hema, said as they set off from home at what she said was the "auspicious time" of 6:30 a.m. (0100 GMT) that the stars were in favour of her husband.

The runup to Monday's election has been described by officials here as the bloodiest in Sri Lanka since independence from the British in 1948. Political violence claimed 474 lives last month, according to official figures.

Most of the killings were blamed on the militant Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, or People's Liberation Front) which is continuing a violent campaign against the 11-year-old government of outgoing President Junius Jayewardene.

The JVP has threatened serious consequences to people voting Monday, but the government Sunday announced that anyone intimidating voters against casting their ballots would face a death sentence.

Results Expected Early 20 Dec

BK1912112388 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] The presidential election to choose an executive president for the next 6 years was held today. Voting began at 0700 [0130 GMT] this morning and ended at 1600 [1030 GMT]. There are around 9.4 million eligible voters. Voting was conducted in 8,070 polling booths throughout the country. Officials said that all arrangements had been finalized for the conduct of a peaceful and fair election.

The three candidates contested the election were: Ossie Abeygoonesekara of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party; Sirimavo Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and R. Premadasa of the United National Party.

The results are expected early tomorrow. Counting of votes will take place in 22 centers. This will begin immediately after the receipt of all ballot boxes. The counting staff had already assembled. A special center to announce the results has been established in Colombo. The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation will have a special transmission to announce the results as soon as they are received.

The observer group from SAARC proceeded with the observance of the election process in Kandy, Anuradhapura, Matara, Jaffna and Colombo electoral districts. They have visited several polling stations in each district, which reflects the cross section of the stations in the urban and rural sectors. In each area they received representations about the conduct of the polls.

Deaths, Bombings Noted in Pre-Election Violence

JVP Kills 10

BK1812090588 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 18 Dec 88

[Text] In Sri Lanka, the JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna] sponsored violence has claimed 10 more lives and disrupted normal life at several places as the island nation prepares to go to the polls tomorrow to elect a new president. Some bombs were hurled at the newly set up polling booths.

Our Colombo correspondent, Plabon Majumder, reports that private buses were off the roads today and most of the shops and eating places, which remain open on Sundays, were closed. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna has called for the boycott of the elections and threatened the people to stay indoors till tomorrow midnight.

Five persons were killed today when armed men attacked the residence of the election organizer of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party near Colombo. Two solders were killed by suspected JVP extremists in Anuradhapura District. A gram mandal [village council] chairman was shot dead in yet another incident. A post office was set on fire and a number of vehicles were burned in other isolated incidents.

6 Killed During Discussion

BK1812115288 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1120 GMT 18 Dec 88

["OANA/pool" Item]

[Text] Colombo, 18 Dec (LANKAPUVATH)—Six persons were killed when gunmen this morning attacked the house of former Member of Parliament Dr Neville Fernando at Panadura, a bustling coastal town 30 km south of Colombo, police told LANKAPUVATH.

They said Dr Fernando had escaped unhurt.

Police said a political discussion was being held at the former M.P.'s residence at Panadura, when at 1020 hours [0450 GMT] three gunmen had arrived on a trailer motorcycle, opened fire at the group of persons and ridden off.

Three of the wounded were killed on the spot, while three others succumbed to their injuries at the Colombo general hospital.

JVP Suspected in Killings

BK1912035288 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] In Sri Lanka, polling began this morning amidst tight security to elect the new executive president of the country. There are three candidates in the fray: Mr Premadasa of the ruling United National Party, Mrs Srimavo Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party [SLFP] and Mr Ossie Abeygoonesekara of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party.

About 94 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise. Polling will continue till 1600 in the afternoon. AIR Colombo Correspondent Plabon Majumder reports that this is the second time when the election is being held to choose the executive president directly under the new Constitution proclaimed in 1978. Mr Jayewardene was the first executive president.

A police spokesman told our correspondent this morning that a presiding officer was killed by suspected extremists at Wellawaya, about 250 km east of Colombo, in Uva Province last night. In another incident, JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna] extremists killed the chief organizer of the SLFP and five of his family in Uva Province last night. An army patrol party was attacked south of Colombo, killing one soldier.

A Buddhist priest and a police constable were also killed in separate incidents. Three passengers were killed when a bomb went off in a crowded bus. Another bomb exploded at a polling booth in Colombo. As already reported, the extremist group, JVP, has called for a boycott of the poll and threatened the people to stay indoors today. The Sri Lankan authorities have warned those trying to disrupt the poll of strict punishment.

Poll Staff Attacked; 1 Killed

BK1912045888 Hong Kong AFP in English 0440 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Colombo, Dec 19 (AFP)—Anti-government militants shot dead a senior election official in southern province and bombed a polling station in the capital before the presidential vote got underway, a military spokesman said Monday.

Gunmen believed to be from the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, or People's Liberation Front) ambushed a bus transporting polls staff in Hambantota District late Sunday, killing a senior presiding officer and wounding two, the spokesman said.

He said the attack, the first against election officials, came despite an armed escort. Another vehicle taking the victims to hospital came under rebel fire but made it to hospital without further casualties.

Hours later, JVP men lobbed a bomb at Torrington in Colombo near the heavily-guarded radio and television stations, wounding a policeman on guard duty.

JVP activists, who have vowed to disrupt balloting, attacked military patrols and felled trees across main highways in different parts of the country to prevent voters getting to polling booths, the spokesman said.

He said 25 people died in what appeared to be politically-motivated attacks around the country on the eve of the election, which was preceded by the bloodiest campaign since independence from the British in 1948.

The victims included an organiser of the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and five members of his family who were mowed down by unidentified gunmen overnight in central Matale District. Four relatives were missing.

Seventeen others—mostly members of the ruling United National Party (UNP)—were killed in similar attacks elsewhere in the country Sunday, the spokesman said.

A Buddhist monk supporting the leftist candidate was shot dead at his temple in Wadduwa, just south of here, Sunday, the spokesman said.

Eight soldiers were wounded while trying to defuse a bomb planted at a polling booth in Manmpitiya in the island's east late Sunday, he added.

Residents in southern Galle town, a stronghold of the JVP, contacted by telephone spoke of a heavy turnout in the area despite rebel threats and said troops were clearing trees and filling up trenches cut across roads.

A polling booth in Hambantota District, further south, was moved to a different location because it was cut off by road blocks, a military official in the area said, adding that turnout there was satisfactory.[passage omitted]

7 Voters Killed 19 Dec

BK1912113488 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1117 GMT 19 Dec 88

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, 19 Dec (LANKAPUVATH)—Seven persons were reported killed today in election violence.

Police told LANKAPUVATH that two men were killed and 10 wounded, when a gunman opened fire with a T-56 rifle at a crowd at a polling booth at Madawala Ulpotha on the Wattegama road, close to Katugastota in the Kandy District.

In another incident, two United National Party supporters were reported killed by subversives, when they were returning after having cast their vote at Morokoliya, Tangalle in the southern province district of Hambantota.

A police report states that a man, who was on his way to cast his vote, was killed at Embilipitiya in the deep south. A woman was killed at Paiyagala, a coastal town south of Colombo in the Kalutara District, when she was returning after casting her vote. A voter was killed at Horana, also in the Kalutara District in a similar incident.

A report from Medirigiriya in the north central province states three persons were wounded, when a gunman fired at them when they were going to vote.

Gunmen Pose as Soldiers; Kill 6

BK1912120588 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1122 GMT 19 Dec 88

["OANA/pool" Item]

[Text] Colombo, 19 Dec (LANKAPUVATH)—Subversive gunmen posing off as soldiers last night raided the home of a Sri Lanka Freedom Party [SLFP] organiser and massacred him and five members of his family, at Matale, in Sri Lanka's central hills, official sources told LANKAPUVATH.

They said Mr Wegodapola, SLFP organiser for the Matale electorate, his father, brother, his brother's son, and two others were the victims.

Four others, who were at Mr Wegodapola's residence at the time of the attack were reported missing. Mr Wegodapola's wife was seriously injured and admitted to hospital.

A senior presiding elections officer was killed and two policemen seriously injured, when armed subversives ambushed a convoy transporting election officials at 2030 hours [1500 GMT] last night, at Wellawaya in the Uva province district of Moneragala.

A bomb exploded inside a Sri Lanka Transport Board [SLTB] bus at Balangoda, in the Ratnapura District, last evening, killing one passenger and seriously wounding four others. Twenty five others received minor injuries.

Eight soldiers were injured, when an Improvised Explosives Device [IED] recovered from a polling booth, exploded at an army detachment at Polonnaruwa in the north central province.

Unidentified gunmen shot dead Mr Wickramarachchi, a United National Party [UNP] polling agent at Ingiriya in the Kalutara District.

A report from Wadduwa, a coastal town south of Colombo, states unidentified gunmen believed by police to be subversives last night shot dead a Buddhist monk, an organiser of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party [SLMP] at the Kanduwa temple. Official sources said the victim was Venerable Premaloka Thero.

Security forces shot dead a subversive, when he tried to escape from custody at Willachiya in the north central province.

Official sources said that at Girulla in the North Western Province District of Kurunegala subversives kidnapped police Constable D. Ratnayake, Sunday night while he was warded as a patient at the Giaulla hospital and killed him by severing his neck.

A report from Gandara, a fishing centre in the Southern Province states unidentified gunmen Sunday night shot dead a UNP supporter, Sarath Kulatunga, at 2330 hours.

Unidentified gunmen killed N. David and R.H. Gnanapala, two strong UNP supporters at Morawaka in the southern province.

AFP Reviews Election, Parties, Issues

BK1712021688 Hong Kong AFP in English 0159 GMT 17 Dec 88

[By Amal Jayasinghe]

[Text] Colombo, Dec 17 (AFP)—Sri Lanka's foreign and economic policies are unlikely to undergo major changes if either of the two main candidates win Monday's presidential election, diplomats and political observers here say.

The two main nominees are Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa, 65, of the ruling United National Party (UNP) and former Premier Sirima Bandaranaike, 72, of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).

The third contestant is Ossie Abeygoonesekera, 38, of the left-wing Sri Lanka Mahajana (People's) Party (SLMP), who has promised drastic changes in the country's policy. But diplomats say his chances of winning are slim.

The UNP, which beat the SLFP in 1977 elections, is a right-wing party with a strong belief in a free economy. It has traditionally been seen as pro-West, while the country remains a member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mrs. Bandaranaike has promised a mixed economy but the present economic policies are unlikely to see drastic changes if she wins, diplomats say. The party may, however, emphasise domestic production in certain sectors to encourage local industrialists and prohibit free imports of some luxury goods.

Party sources say the SLFP has learnt lessons from the days when its policies led to overall economic growth, but brought in serious food shortages and long queues between 1970 and 1977.

In 1977, the UNP removed all restrictions on imports. Sri Lanka is overflowing with imported merchandise—anything is available for a price—and UNP leaders keep pointing out the difference at election rallies. The UNP is unlikely to change its policies in the coming years.

"The SLFP knows that people have liked this system and is unlikely to change it," said a Western diplomat. "There might be cosmetic changes, but you must remember that today's SLFP is not the SLFP of 1970."

The SLFP then had a strong left-wing component, which in 1984 broke away to set up the SLMP. Sections of the SLFP are still considered left-wing, but political observers say the dominant section owes its allegiance to Mrs. Bandaranaike's son, Anura, who is known to be right-wing.

The architect of UNP economic policies, Ronnie de Mel, who was finance minister from 1977 to early 1988, is now with the SLFP and is expected to give free-economy orientation to any future SLFP government.

Diplomats say it is in the area of foreign policy that slight changes might be seen, with India at the centre of attention.

The UNP, faced with mounting Tamil militancy after 1983, blamed India for the trouble and began to seek close relations with the United States, Britain, China, Pakistan and Israel.

But in July 1987 it did an about turn and signed a peace treaty with New Delhi under which India has deployed some 50,000 troops in the island's north and east to disarm the Tamil militants.

The presidential candidates have emphasized the need to send back the troops as soon as possible, but Indian diplomats say a total pullout is unlikely in the immediate future.

In the weeks preceding the election, both Mr. Premadasa and Mrs. Bandaranaike have softened their stand towards India, and are today dubbed by anti-government Sinhalese militants as stooges of "Indian imperialism."

"They have basically no choice," said an Indian diplomat. "Whoever wins will realise that today's Sri Lanka cannot be controlled by their troops alone. They will need us and we are going to be here."

But diplomats say a new president might renegotiate the peace accord. Mrs. Bandaranaike is known to be strongly pro-non-alignment—a movement of which India is a founder-member. She is also violently anti-Israel and has promised to shut the Israeli interests section in Colombo.

She closed the Israeli Embassy here in 1970. The interests section was opened in 1985 when Colombo sought help from Tel Aviv to battle Tamil separatists, some of whom had close links with Palestinian guerrilla groups.

Parliament Extends Emergency Rule 'Indefinitely'
BK1712060088 Hong Kong AFP in English 0553 GMT 17 Dec 88

[Text] Colombo, Dec 17 (AFP)—The Sri Lankan Parliament extended the state of emergency in the country indefinitely Saturday because of continuing arson and violence.

The Parliament, dominated by the ruling United National Party (UNP), voted 65 for and two against a motion to extend the emergency which gives sweeping powers to security forces battling anti-government militants.

The emergency, first imposed in May 1983, has been extended each month. It was the first time it has been prolonged indefinitely.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vincent Perera said 474 people had been killed throughout the country in the month ending December 14. More than 400 deaths had been reported from the island's south, where the anti-government Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has been spearheading a terror campaign.

He said 115 weapons had been stolen from the Armed Forces and individual gun holders during this period by the JVP, or People's Liberation Front, which has threatened to disrupt Monday's presidential elections.

The two MP's [members of Parliament] who voted against the extention of emergency rule belonged to the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Sri Lanka and the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).

The emergency has been extended three days before a scheduled dissolution of parliament and hours before the Cabinet was due to hold a special meeting here to review the security situation. The Sri Lankan Cabinet usually meets every Wednesday.

Defense Ministry Dispels Rumor of Election Curfew
BK1812114088 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1117 GMT 18 Dec 88

["OANA/pool" Item]

[Text] Colombo, 18 Dec (LANKAPUVATH)—The Ministry of Defense today described as totally false a rumor being spread by mischievous elements that there will be a curfew tomorrow, when the presidential election is on.

A communique issued today by the Ministry of Defense states it has been reported to the secretary, Ministry of Defense, that there is a rumour being spread by mischevious elements that there will be a curfew on 19 December, during election time. This is totally false. All persons are advised to cast their votes at their respective polling stations. Necessary security arrangements have been provided.

Meanwhile, a government communique states that any person by words, whether written or spoken, or by signs, or by conduct compels, induces, or incites any other person to refrain from voting at the presidential elections to be held tommorrow, 19 December 1988, shall be punishable with death or imprisonment for a period of not less than 10 years.

The security forces have been directed to enforce this regulation using maximum force where necessary.

Premadasa Comments on Election, Bomb Blast
BK1912080288 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 19 Dec 88

[Text] The prime minister of Sri Lanka, Mr R. Premadasa, has described today's presidential election as a contest between the ballot and the bullet. Mr Premadasa, who is himself the ruling United National Party's candidate in the election, expressed his confidence that the ballot would ultimately come out triumphant.

He was speaking to newsmen after casting his vote at a polling booth in central Colombo. He and his wife were among the first to cast their votes at the booth. Minutes before the presidential election got underway, a bomb blast rocked a polling station in Colombo. A policeman was wounded.

A bomb was also lobbed near the heavily-guarded radio and television stations. However, there is no report of any casualty. The extremist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have called upon the Sinhalese and the Tamils to boycott the polls.

5 Arrested for Bomb Blast at Bandaranaike Meeting
BK1712101188 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0938 GMT 17 Dec 88

["OANA/Pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, 17 Dec (LANKAPUVATH)—Five suspects were arrested by the police as they were allegedly escaping in a car after exploding bombs, which injured 36 persons at a meeting in support of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party's presidential candidate Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike last night, in the Colombo south suburb of Ratmalana, police told LANKAPUVATH.

The car had got caught up in the traffic jam that followed the explosion.

They said three of the suspects had also sustained injuries in the explosion, which occurred at 2000 hours [1430 GMT] yesterday, as Mrs Bandaranaike was about to make her last campaign speech. Two of them were from Ratmalana and the third from Moratuwa.

Police said the explosion had occurred about 100 yards from the stage and Mrs Bandaranaike was not hurt. Thirty six persons had been injured and admitted to the Colombo south hospital.

Police described the suspects as being between the ages of 25 and 35 years. The driver and another occupant of the car had claimed the vehicle had been hijacked by the three other suspects escaping from the scene of the crime. This was also being investigated, police said.

Police said the bomb explosion had occurred amidst the lighting of [fire]crackers as Mrs Bandaranaike was about to address the meeting at Belekkade junction, Ratmalana.